The Radio Spectrum & Tomorrow's Communication (Part II)

written by Manoj Khanna | April 20, 2003

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Sitting at Starbucks, enjoying my Soy Latte, I also enjoy the HotSpot. Sometimes, I spend a whole day sitting there, as I'm plugged into the rest of the world through the HotSpot. The "Wi-Fi" HotSpot. But as I'm sitting there and reading across the Wireless Local Loop (WLL) is something which makes me feel better and sad at the same time. I'm waiting to get to experience of what was to come – but for now its missed.

People who want the high speed internet connection, either go for DSL, or Broadband Cable. But are these the real sources required for surfing the internet. Is this we call the Internet, sitting at home, or office plugged through the cable or telehone. The imagination is equally weird – the 1950s telephone line carrying the broadband – which isn't cheap and profitable at the same time to the telphone companies – abyss – the consumer.

WLL on the other hand is free from all those drawbacks. Radio waves reach everyones homes and offices, they do not require to dig up streets or shoehorn data into a system designed for voice. The frequencies at which the radio waves travel are in certain cases unlicensed, thus this opens up the market for many ones. WLL, on the technological front has improved a lot since its inception – not requiring a line of sight from the customers building to the service provider's base station or outdoor installations like satellite dishes.

Today companies have developed terminals which are as easy as carrying a mobile telephone. Plug and play devices. You buy these terminals at a store and then plug into your PC, and

rest the self-guided screen will take you through billing and selection of voice and data package. The speed on these terminals is around 12 megabits per second – 10 times faster than the broadband and 200 times faster than a dial-up. In other cases, the data speeds are higher than imagined. Also, creation of not only the so-called HotSpots, rather covering the entire city. Aiming for true mobility in this internet-age. Technologies such as third-generation(3G), Universal Mobile Telecommunications System (UMTS), Orthogonal Frequency Division Multiplexing (OFDM), and Voice over Internet Protocol (VoIP) [for carrying calls across internet and other networks] are not increasing comptetion rather they are increasing choices for the consumer. Choose what best works for you. Eliminating the so-called BIG players from the picture would certainly give a lot of breathing room to today's suffocating consumer with the choices tomorrow.

So how far we are before we can use this technology? Depends where you live. In the event of regulations and the delay-adaptation and "the economy" – it all depends on the BIG players when they roll-out, though all long-distance carriers have WLL spectrum licenses. But as of now Broadband and DSL are the main selling points, and the wireless/mobility is the "little extra".

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