



TECHNICAL COLUMNS

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SILLY CABLE TECH TERMS

By RON HRANAC

Rather than my usual discourse about things technical, this month's column takes advantage of April Fools and pokes fun at some of our lingo, thoroughly tongue-in-cheek. I first checked with CT's managing editor, and he gave the thumbs up and even suggested a few terms himself. Following that, I put out a call on the SCTE-List for favorite silly cable tech terms and such, promising to keep the identities of those who answered that call anonymous - to protect the guilty, of course. What you see here is what's left after the editors kept the truly tasteless and really funny definitions for their own internal "forward this to 10 friends" e-mails.

Terms of endearment

QAM modulator: QAMulator

BER: What you say when you're cold

Megahertz: Hurts, like, really a lot (Bumper sticker: "Cable people do it 'til their megahertz")

Gigahertz: Really, really hurts a lot (Bumper sticker: "Microwave engineers do it 'til their gigahertz")

Gig: Multi-pointed spear for catching frogs

Push-pull amplifiers: Every other amplifier installed backward

Feedforward amplifier: The trunk amp next to Burger King

VoIP: Famous movie star Jon VoIP

UPS: They drive big brown trucks.

OSS: Forerunner to the CIA

QoS: We'll QoS that bridge when we get to it.

dBs: dollar bills

EMI: Record label

EIA: e i e i o

ET: Phone home

Expo: Former boyfriend



FAQ: "Just the FAQs, ma'am"

FEC: See "FAQ"

GUI: Fuzzy sometimes, but not actually gooey

HSD: One of those 1960s hippy psychedelic drugs

STB: The free love culture of those 1960s hippies that used HSD resulted in the spread of STBs; inspired the song "Ring of Fire."

MAC: All hail Steve Jobs

PHY: From childhood nursery rhyme: "phee, phy, pho, phum..."

NID: Something King Arthur's knights say

Nanometer: Very small measuring device

NTSC: Never Twice Same Color

SECAM: System Essentially Contrary to the American Method

PAL: Pictures (or Peace) At Last

PBX: Peanut butter and something

IP: Well, good for you.

Wi-Fi: Why not?

Edge: Not a physical place, guys. Not even always the same logical place. (This one's true.)

Fiber: Keeps ya regular

Plant: Good source of fiber

Franchise: Y'want fries wit' dat?

Subscriber penetration: Um, we won't go there.

Cumulative Leakage Index: Time for some Depends

RFoG: RF goggles that allow you to see the RF flowing through the cable

HD: Hogs distribution; huge dent (in wallet)

Multiplexed: Confused about many things

Fidelity: Cuban patriotism

Broadband: An all-girl orchestra

Flutter: A flutt player

Diode: A poem about death

Microwave: Greeting between micros

Loop test: In the old West, this was done just before a public hanging.

Net loss: Money left after taxes

Decibel: A dancer from Biblical times

MER: Valuable gift in Biblical times, as in "frankincense and MER"

Drop repeater: A leaky faucet

Converter: A missionary

Crosstalk: Speech by a missionary

Baseband: Musicians who stay out of treble

Diversity reception: Sultan entering his harem

Tru2way: Opposite of False2way

OCAP renamed: We're developing this really amazing new Tru2way (OCAP) application that performs Optical Character Recognition called OCRAP.

IMS: Implement Maybe Someday

Ringback: The opposite of ring forward

Early Media Detection: Did the morning newspaper get delivered?

Early Media Corruption/Early Media Deletion: The dog ate the morning newspaper.

Latency and Jitter: Conditions suffered by us old cable dawgs

POTS: When are they coming out with PANS?

ISDN: Innovations Subscribers Don't Need; It Still Does Nothing

LEC: Losing Existing Customers

OK, those last couple are telco terms, and the telcos would be inclined to respond with Cable: Crummy Asynchronous Bandwidth Limited Experience.

Continuing ...

FIOS: Another telco term. No one suggested anything for this, so drop me a line if you have a good definition.

AAA: Ain't An Acronym

ISP: Internet Spam Provider

Email: Every Message is Annoyingly Inane and Lacking

Internet: A pipe system similar to what carries water or electricity. Friction on the way through the Internet pipe results in bits being torn loose from a data stream and left floating. A periodic purging of the Internet is required to remove the millions of loose bits that have not found their destination. Failure to clean the pipes results in broken VoIP conversations, high latency, stuck modems and flap lists. Loose bits have a tendency to coagulate into loose bytes and, because of the non-coherent nature of the bits, can cause any number of problems from pop-ups to failure to work with Vista. Al Gore, the inventor of the Internet, is working on a fix for loose bytes.

I'd be remiss if I failed to include a couple marketing terms.

Solution: Something dissolved in a liquid, such as tincture of iodine

Leading, as in "XYZ Co., a leading provider of ...": I think you're trying to lead me astray, quite frankly.

The following are real terms and definitions, used by a cable op in Bermuda.

Jungle Cable: Any wire or cable that must be run through the jungle underbrush to get to a customer's home or to the next available pole. It is generally installed using a machete and laid directly on the ground because in a day or two the jungle will have overgrown it anyway so no one will care it is there.

Water Cable: Coax that must be installed via a water access, be it from one island to another or just simply as a means of access; may require scuba gear.

Knock Me Up: When someone asks you to come by their house and wake them up or ask them to go to work.

Top 10

Let's wrap up with a top-10 list. You know you're a cable guy if ...

10. You know what a bugnut, pickle, skyhook, cable stretcher and 12 dB left-handed signal shifter are.
9. You take a pocket full of pads and equalizers with you to Wal-Mart to try them in various tackle boxes.
8. You get excited by the Sun glinting off the lashing wire of brand-spanking newly installed cable plant.
7. You like bucket trucks better than sports cars.
6. You named your dog "Splicer."
5. You think "Corporate Engineering" is the same as "Military Intelligence."
4. You have ever pounded on the strand to watch a squirrel spin and try to run along the strand in a rotating motion.
3. You can change a tire armed only with a pair of 9-inch Kleins.
2. You have ever used the term "diddle stick" in a romantic conversation with your wife.
1. You drive around on vacation with a kink in your neck from looking at other people's plant.

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