

## Why “Cable” is NOT the right solution for better Broadband

By Butler Smythe

The basic technology behind what most refer to as “Cable” (Community Access Television (CATV)) today was developed and initially introduced to the American public over 70 years ago. In that time it has matured and been a conduit for TV and now Internet services. But after 70 years, its technology and capabilities (to include capacity/speed for Internet) have been surpassed by fiber optic systems that are more economically supportable and materially survivable. They are “future proof” while Cable is not.

Cable is a technology that is restricted in performance because it is a shared (many users on same line) copper-based system. The radio frequency (RF) signal used drops in strength over distance (as does electricity by the way) negatively affecting the end-user’s ability to receive but more importantly send/upload information. The latter degraded capability is dramatic.

### Example:

Fiber today can serve users at 1 Gbps Download and 1 Gbps Upload. That capacity will increase in the near future.

Cable is advertised by some (i.e. Spectrum) at up to 1 Gbps Download, but only 50 Mbps Upload. The upload numbers are *intentionally* difficult to find online. To get a 50 Mbps upload capacity, you have to pay for 1 Gbps service – if it is even available in your area. The 1 Gbps download is only available in densely populated areas – not in Rural America – and definitely not for Blue Hill, Stonington or Deer Isle subscribers that have access to Spectrum. Why? I have that information if you’re interested....

TV is no longer solely an over the air RF delivered service. Many Americans get TV though wired (cable, fiber or phone line (DSL)) services and they also get it from satellites because of the lack of viable alternatives. Some wired Internet access systems are based on older copper-based technology and will age out - some sooner than others (dial-up & DSL) with cable to follow in turn. Fiber optic systems will be with us for more than our lifetimes and fiber is the backbone for all Internet today. It serves all Internet, TV and Cellular systems - none can operate without it.

That says something doesn’t it? That and the fact fiber-optic cable on utility poles costs virtually the same as CATV, but is cheaper to maintain and the growth potential is potentially limitless.

So why invest in copper when you could have fiber? It doesn’t make any sense!