ADSL Forum

Web Site Review

by [Shawn M. Brown](#)

Many people enjoy high-speed Internet access over dedicated lines at work or school but such a service is often not available to the average home user. Today, the most common modems deliver information over regular phone lines at speeds of 28.8 or 33.6 kilobits per second, and lately, 56kps modems offer even higher speeds for home Internet users. Integrated Services Digital Network (ISDN) lines offer marginally faster Internet access at a higher cost, and cable Internet providers offer relatively fast and inexpensive Internet access. Still, consumers continue to demand faster access and cheaper rates. At the same time, service providers--especially telecommunications companies--want to use existing infrastructure to deliver Internet access. This creates a roadblock on the information superhighway that demands the immediate attention of telecommunication companies, Internet service providers, and consumers worldwide.

The ADSL Forum believes that one solution to the home Internet access problem lies with **Asynchronous Digital Subscriber Lines** (**ADSL**). These lines utilize existing copper wires that currently connect virtually all homes for telephone services. This technology offers download speeds of up to 9 megabits per second, which is many times faster than even ISDN lines. Furthermore, ADSL technology offers lower infrastructure costs than cable modems.

The ADSL Forum website (http://www.adsl.com) educates telecommunication companies, Internet service providers, and consumers about the latest developments pertaining to this emerging standard. ADSL Forum membership is limited to companies, but the website is open to all visitors and contains a plethora of market and technical information. The [ADSL Forum](#) section gives further details on its purpose and membership.

On your first visit to the ADSL Forum website, you may want to browse the [Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)](#) section that defines ADSL in very basic terms. In addition, it addresses the questions relating to current applications and availability. In an apparent effort to spark interest in ADSL, the FAQ emphasizes market potential, but also includes short definitions for some acronyms that appear throughout the website. For more information, however, the [Technical Information](#) area offers a better description of ADSL technology.

The [Technical Information](#) section provides a great mix of basic tutorial guides and advanced technical papers on ADSL. The illustrated ``[General Introduction to Copper Access Technologies](#)'' guides the reader from early voice-grade modems to current ADSL developments. The chronological discussion presents the differences among voice-grade data modems, basic Digital Subscriber Lines (including ISDN), T1, High Data Rate DSLs (HDSL), Single Line DSLs (SDSL), and ADSL. The ``[ADSL Tutorial](#)'' provides a more lengthy description of ADSL technologies and their current applications. For experienced readers, several technical papers such as ``[ATM over ADSL Recommendations](#)'' and ``[Network Migration](#)'' provide a more in-depth analysis of applications for ADSL. Finally, an [online glossary](#) helps all readers understand the many terms and acronyms that appear throughout the materials.

In addition to technical information, the ADSL Forum also discusses marketing for ADSL. The [Marketing Information](#) section includes a survey for visitors to submit, and a list of ADSL vendors. A short article in this section argues for the need for breakthrough technologies that will enable providers to save money by utilizing existing infrastructure.

In addition to technical and marketing information, the ADSL Forum website also includes upcoming presentation information, deployment information, and press releases. The [Upcoming Meetings and Ambassador Presentations](#) section appeals mostly to members of the ADSL Forum. Non-members are not permitted to attend meetings, but the ADSL Forum sends representatives to conferences and special events to promote the developing technology. The [ADSL Trials and Deployments](#) section includes detailed charts on current services available worldwide. The [Press Room](#) section includes press releases related to ADSL, as well as links to other ADSL-related websites, including service providers, vendors, market research information, and publications. You may find it interesting to explore some of those resources after reading the information contained within the ADSL Forum website.

With the challenges that lie ahead in providing consumers with high-speed Internet access, the ADSL Forum website should be your first stop for information about emerging technologies relating to Internet access. The information contained within the site is up-to-date, and links to outside resources are organized logically to help you find the information you want. Its broad overview helps those relatively unfamiliar with ADSL, while its in-depth papers and resources help experts contribute to the advancement of ADSL. The ADSL Forum avoids specific product endorsements because members include many competing companies. Expect this site to provide even more relevant information in the future, especially as the technology finds its way into more homes.

Shawn M. Brown is a Junior majoring in computer science at Hiram College.