

# Data Over Cable Interface Specifications

## Cable Modem Termination System– Network Side Interface Specification

**SP-CMTS-NSII01-960702**

**INTERIM  
SPECIFICATION**

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**Document Status Sheet**

**Document Control Number:** SP-CMTS-NSII01-960702

**Document Title:** Cable Modem Termination System–  
Network Side Interface Specification

**Revision History:**

I01 7/2/96 Release as interim specification (01)

**Date:** July 2, 1996

**Responsible Author:** Stuart Lipoff

**Status:**

~~Work in process~~                      ~~Draft~~                      **Interim**                      ~~Released~~

**Distribution Restrictions:**

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# Cable Modem Termination System- Network Side Interface Specification

## 1. Scope and Purpose

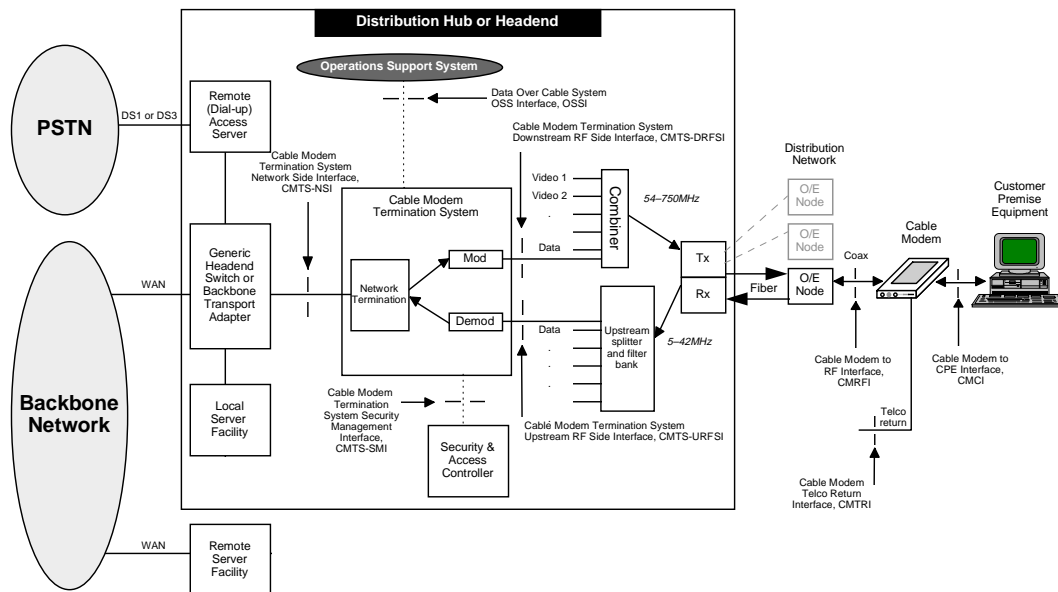
This interface specification is one of a family of interface specifications designed to facilitate the implementation of data service over Hybrid Fiber Coax (HFC) cable networks, as well as over coaxial-only cable networks. Figure 1, on the following page, provides the context for this specification in relation to the data over cable reference architecture and the other interface specifications in the family. This specification defines the applicable communications standards and protocols as needed to implement a cable modem network termination system to backbone network transport adapter interface. It applies to cable systems employing HFC and coaxial-only architectures. Specifically, the scope of this specification is to:

- Describe the communications protocols and standards to be employed
- Specify the data communication requirements and parameters which shall be common to all units
- Describe any additional application-unique interface requirements to insure support for data over cable services

The intent of this document is to specify open protocols with a preference for existing, well-known, and well-accepted protocols. This interface standard is written to provide the minimal set of requirements for satisfactory communication between the headend and backbone elements in a data over cable system.

The term “Cable Modem Termination System–Network Side Interface” (CMTS-NSI) shall be the general term used to describe this interface.

Figure 1. Data Over Cable Reference Architecture



The status of the other specifications in the Data Over Cable Interface specifications family is provided below (for updates refer to URL <http://www.cablemodem.com>).

<b>Designation</b>	<b>Title</b>	<b>Status</b>
SP-CMCI	Cable Modem to Customer Premise Equipment Interface	Draft
SP-CMRFI	Cable Modem to RF Interface	In process
SP-CMTRI	Cable Modem Telco Return Interface	Draft
SP-CMTS-DRFSI	Cable Modem Termination System Downstream RF Side Interface	In process
SP-CMTS-NSI	Cable Modem Termination System Network Side Interface	Draft
SP-CMTS-SMI	Cable Modem Termination System Security Management Interface	Not started
SP-CMTS-URFSI	Cable Modem Termination System Upstream RF Side Interface	In process
SP-OSSI	Operations Support System Interface	In process
TR-OSSI	Operations Support Framework	In process

**Key to Designation**

- SP** Specification
- TR** Technical Report (provides a context for understanding and applying the specification)

## 2. Definitions

**ANSI** — American National Standards Institute

**ARP** — Address Resolution Protocol

**ATM** — Asynchronous Transfer Mode

**Cable Modem (CM)** — A modulator-demodulator at a subscriber location intended for use in conveying data communications on a cable television system.

**Cable Modem Termination System (CMTS)** — Cable modem termination system, located at the cable television system headend or distribution hub, which provides complementary functionality to the cable modems to enable data connectivity to a wide-area network.

**Cable network** — Refers to the cable television plant that would typically be used for data over cable services. Such plants generally employ a downstream path in the range of 54MHz on the low end to a high end in the 440 to 750MHz range and an upstream path in the range of 5 to 42MHz. Customers share a common communications path for upstream and a separate common path for downstream (i.e., effectively a pair of unidirectional busses).

**CM** — Cable modem (see above)

**CMCI** — Cable Modem to CPE Interface

**CMTRI** — Cable Modem Telco Return Interface is the *upstream* interface between a telco modem attached to, or inside of, a cable modem and the CMTS.

**CMTS** — Cable Modem Termination System (see above)

**CMTS-NSI** — Cable Modem Termination System—Network Side Interface

**CPE** — Customer Premise Equipment

**DHCP** — Dynamic Host Configuration Protocol (see below)

**Downstream** — In cable television, the direction of transmission from the headend to the subscriber.

**Dynamic Host Configuration Protocol (DHCP)** — An Internet protocol used for assigning network-layer (IP) addresses.

**FDDI** — Fiber Distributed Data Interface (alternatively, Fibre Data Distributed Interface)

**HFC** — Hybrid Fiber Coax (see below)

**Hybrid Fiber/Coax (HFC) System** — A broadband bi-directional shared-media transmission system using fiber trunks between the headend and the fiber nodes, and coaxial distribution from the fiber nodes to the customer locations.

**ICMP** — Internet Control Message Protocol (see below)

**IEEE** — Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineers (see below)

**IETF** — Internet Engineering Task Force

**Institute of Electrical and Electronic Engineers (IEEE)** — A voluntary organization which, among other things, sponsors standards committees and is accredited by the American National Standards Institute.

**Internet Control Message Protocol (ICMP)** — An Internet network-layer protocol.

**Internet Protocol (IP)** — An Internet network-layer protocol.

**IP** — Internet Protocol (see above)

**Logical Link Control (LLC) procedure** — In a local area network (LAN) or a Metropolitan Area Network (MAN), that part of the protocol that governs the assembling of data link layer frames and their exchange between data stations, independent of how the transmission medium is shared.

**LLC** — Logical Link Control (see above)

**MAC** — Media Access Control also Medium Access Control (see below)

**MCNS** — Multimedia Cable Network Systems Holdings, L.P. (see below)

**Media Access Control (MAC) sublayer** — The part of the data link layer that supports topology-dependent functions and uses the services of the Physical Layer to provide services to the logical link control (LLC) sublayer.

**Multimedia Cable Network System (MCNS) Holdings, L.P.** — A consortium of Comcast Cable Communications, Inc., Cox Communications, Tele-Communications, Inc., and Time Warner Cable, interested in deploying high-speed data communications systems on cable television systems.

**OSI** — Open Systems Interconnection

**PC** — Personal Computer

**RFC** — Request For Comments

**SNAP** — Subnetwork Access Protocol described in IEEE Std 802.2 Annex D

**SNMP** — Simple Network Management Protocol

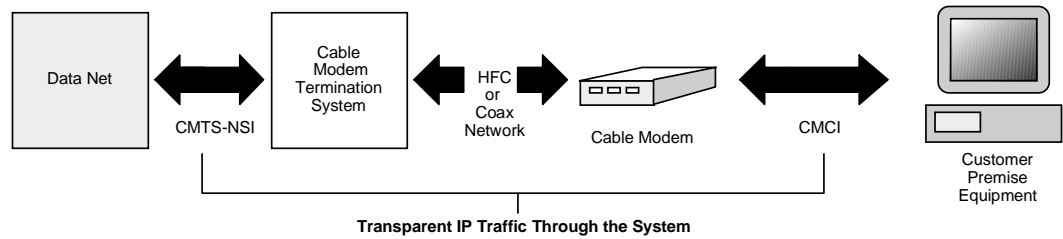
**UDP** — User Datagram Protocol

**Upstream** — The direction from the subscriber location toward the headend.

### 3. Functional Reference Model

The intended service will allow IP traffic (version 4 with migration to version 6) to achieve transparent bi-directional transfer between the Cable Modem Termination System – Network Side Interface (CMTS-NSI) and the Cable Modem to CPE interface (CMCI), as illustrated in Figure 2.

**Figure 2. IP Traffic Flow**



## 4. Communications Specifications

The Internet Protocol (IP) version 4 standard is required at the network layer. This specification will evolve to support IP version 6 (IETF RFC 1883) as it becomes an accepted standard.

Several data link and physical layer combinations are required to carry the IP traffic:

- ATM over STS-3c
- ATM over DS3
- FDDI
- 802.3 over 10BASE-T
- 802.3 over 100BASE-T
- Ethernet over 10BASE-T
- Ethernet over 100BASE-T

To be considered compliant with this specification, equipment must be available with any data link and physical layer combination selected from the above list. The selected configuration shall be specified by the customer at the time of purchase order (for example: a customer may order a CMTS with an FDDI interface or, alternatively, a customer might order a CMTS with an Ethernet over 100BASE-T interface).

All data link and physical layer combinations shall support and be transparent to IP datagrams in accordance with the specified standard(s).

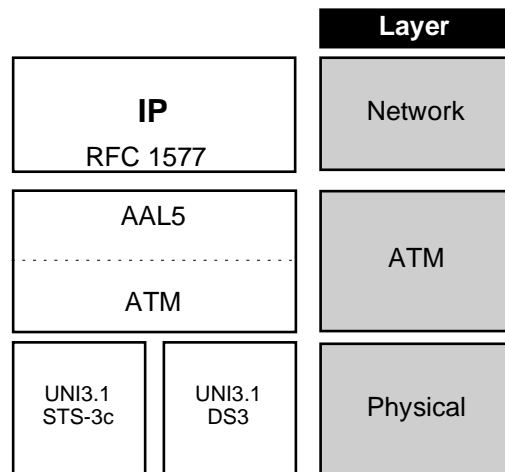
Network layer requirements for the CMTS exist beyond transparency to IP traffic. The CMTS must also support:

- variable length subnet masks
- classless addressing
- IP multicast addressing and forwarding
- Internet Group Management Protocol (IGMP)
- proxy ARP
- filtering of DHCP downstream-bound broadcast packets to protect against BOOTP server spoofing

## 4.1 IP Over ATM

The required protocols for IP over ATM implementations are illustrated in Figure 3.

Figure 3. IP over ATM Protocol Stack



### 4.1.1 Network Layer

The IP shall be utilized in accordance with IETF RFC 1577, “Classical IP and ARP over ATM.”

### 4.1.2 ATM Adaptation Layer

The ATM Adaptation Layer interface shall be in accordance with IETF RFC 1577, “Classical IP and ARP over ATM” and ATM UNI 3.1. ATM Adaptation Layer Type 5 (AAL5) shall be utilized.

### 4.1.3 ATM Layer

The ATM layer implementation shall be in accordance with ATM UNI 3.1.

### 4.1.4 Physical Layer

Two physical layer implementations are required. The selected configuration shall be specified by the customer at the time of purchase.

#### 4.1.4.1 STS-3c

The STS-3c physical layer implementation shall be in accordance with ATM UNI 3.1.

#### 4.1.4.2 DS3

The DS3 physical layer implementation shall be in accordance with ATM UNI 3.1.

## 4.2 IP Over FDDI

The required protocols for IP over FDDI implementations are illustrated in Figure 4.

**Figure 4. IP over FDDI Protocol Stack**

OSI Layer	
<b>IP</b> RFC 1390	Network
802.2 LLC	Data Link
X3.139 FDDI-MAC	
X3.148 FDDI-PHY	Physical
X3.166 FDDI-PMD	

**4.2.1 Network Layer**

The IP shall be utilized in accordance with IETF RFC 1390, “Transmission of IP and ARP over FDDI Networks.”

**4.2.2 Data Link Layer**

The FDDI MAC sublayer interface shall be in accordance with ANSI X3.139-1987, Fiber Distributed Data Interface (FDDI) — Token ring media access control (MAC).

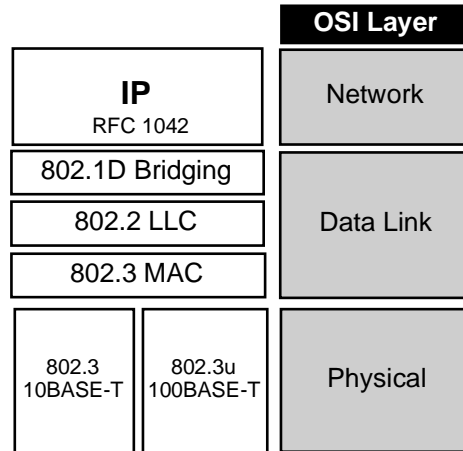
**4.2.3 Physical Layer**

The FDDI physical layer interface shall be in accordance with ANSI X3.166-1990, Fibre Data Distributed Interface (FDDI) — Token Ring Physical Layer Medium Dependent (PMD) and ANSI X3.148-1988, Fiber Distributed Data Interface (FDDI) — Token Ring Physical Layer Protocol (PHY).

### 4.3 IP Over IEEE 802

The required protocols for IP over IEEE 802 implementations are illustrated in Figure 5.

Figure 5. IP over IEEE 802 Protocol Stack



#### 4.3.1 Network Layer

The IP shall be utilized in accordance with IETF RFC 1042, “A Standard for the Transmission of IP Datagrams over IEEE 802 Networks.”

##### 4.3.1.1 Address Resolution

Address Resolution shall be achieved in accordance with IETF RFC 826, “An Ethernet Address Resolution Protocol.”

#### 4.3.2 Data Link Layer

##### 4.3.2.1 802.2 LLC

The LLC sublayer interface shall be in accordance with ISO/IEC 8802-2: 1994, Class I, with Sub-network Access Protocol (SNAP).

##### 4.3.2.2 802.3 MAC

The MAC sublayer interface shall be in accordance with ISO/IEC 8802-3: 1995. A 48-bit address shall be utilized.

##### 4.3.2.3 Bridging

The CMTS shall perform MAC bridging in accordance with ISO/IEC 10038 (ANSI/IEEE Std 802.1D): 1993.

#### 4.3.3 Physical Layer

Two physical layer implementations are required. The selected configuration shall be specified by the customer at the time of purchase.

**4.3.3.1 10BASE-T**

The physical layer interface shall be in accordance with ISO/IEC 8802-3: 1995 for 10BASE-T operation.

**4.3.3.2 100BASE-T**

The physical layer interface shall be in accordance with IEEE Std 802.3u-1995 for 100BASE-T operation. Autonegotiation per IEEE Std 802.3u-1995 is required.

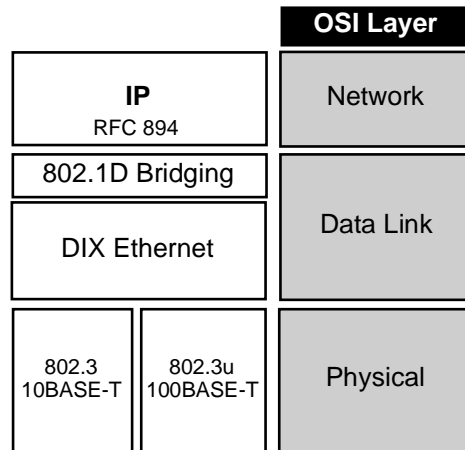
**4.3.3.2.1 Connectors**

The interface shall be capable of supporting the T4, TX and FX Medium Dependent Interface alternatives for 100BASE-T operation.

**4.4 IP Over Ethernet**

The required protocols for IP over Ethernet implementations are illustrated in Figure 6.

**Figure 6. IP over Ethernet Protocol Stack**



**4.4.1 Network Layer**

The IP shall be utilized in accordance with IETF RFC 894, “A Standard for the Transmission of IP Datagrams over Ethernet Networks.”

**4.4.1.1 Address Resolution**

Ethernet Address Resolution shall be achieved in accordance with IETF RFC 826, “An Ethernet Address Resolution Protocol.”

**4.4.2 Data Link Layer**

The data link layer interface shall be in accordance with DIX Ethernet Version 2.0.

**4.4.2.1 Address Length**

A 48-bit address shall be utilized.

#### **4.4.2.2 Bridging**

The CMTS shall perform MAC bridging in accordance with ISO/IEC 10038 (ANSI/IEEE Std 802.1D): 1993.

#### **4.4.3 Physical Layer**

Two physical layer implementations are required. The selected configuration shall be specified by the customer at the time of purchase.

##### **4.4.3.1 10BASE-T**

The physical layer interface shall be in accordance with ISO/IEC 8802-3: 1995 for 10BASE-T operation.

##### **4.4.3.2 100BASE-T**

The physical layer interface shall be in accordance with IEEE Std 802.3u-1995 for 100BASE-T operation. Autonegotiation per IEEE Std 802.3u-1995 is required.

##### **4.4.3.2.1 Connectors**

The interface shall be capable of supporting the T4, TX and FX Medium Dependent Interface alternatives for 100BASE-T operation.

## 5. References

ANSI X3.139-1987, Fiber Distributed Data Interface (FDDI) — Token Ring Media Access Control (MAC).

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