



# Ethernet Goes Wide at Supercomm

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Extending Ethernet networks was one of the major topics at Supercomm 2005, and several providers took the opportunity to highlight their newest services.

[Heavy Reading](#) senior analyst Stan Hubbard predicted we would see a few carriers touting deployments, especially of multipoint Ethernet services using either virtual private LAN (VPLS) technology or Sonet with RPR, as well as some interest in access technologies that make use of existing copper (see [Supercomm Preview, Part I](#)). And he was right on:

[Broadwing Communications LLC](#) and [OnFiber Communications Inc.](#) have pooled their resources to launch a VPLS network in the U.S. (see [Broadwing, OnFiber Launch VPLS](#) and [Supercomm Tuesday](#)). It combines [Broadwing Communications LLC](#)'s new converged services network, which runs multiple applications like VOIP and data protection over a single pipe, with [OnFiber Communications](#)'s Ethernet network (see [Broadwing Launches Services](#)).

According to *Light Reading's* [Ethernet Services Directory](#), OnFiber provides metro coverage in major cities of 12 states from coast to coast plus D.C. (Directory: [OnFiber Ethernet Services](#)).

The joint network provides point-to-point and multipoint WAN connections, supporting either VPLS or MPLS VPNs. With multipoint connections a hot topic in the increasingly hot Ethernet market, VPLS-ready services have begun to emerge in recent months (see [Viatel Rises Again](#), [China Telecom Deploys Alcatel's VPLS](#), and [NTL Casts a Wide Ethernet](#)). The Ethernet Services Directory shows these offerings are still very much in their infancy, with just five of the 457 services listed using VPLS technology.

Two of the newest Ethernet services take advantage of Ethernet-over-copper solutions to expand their reach and potential market. As Ethernet services continue to spread beyond the early adopters, carriers are looking to accommodate customers in off-net locations where fiber hasn't been laid. If providers can offer Ethernet over copper networks, their reach immediately opens up to customers that have been stuck with slower connections and no way to receive these services before.

[Expedient](#) is offering an "Ethernet Anywhere" service that allows it to provide point-to-point connections over copper, Sonet, and dark fiber networks (see [ANDA Announces Deployments](#)). That means [Expedient](#) can use TDM network equipment without expensive upgrades to converge applications like Internet access, VOIP, video conferencing, and file sharing over a single Ethernet link. The new service will bring together managed private line, transparent LAN, and storage connections, offering those much sought-after multipoint configurations.

Similarly, [Yipes Enterprise Services Inc.](#) is touting its new ExpressReach service, which uses existing in-building wiring to provide Ethernet connections and is integrated with its [Yipes MAN \(Metro Area Network\)](#) and [Yipes NET \(High Speed Internet\)](#) services (see [Yipes Launches ExpressReach](#)). [Yipes Enterprise Services Inc.](#) says the aim is to reach SMBs and branch office locations that have been stuck with slow DSL, Frame Relay, or T1 connections with a service that will scale up to 10 Mbit/s.

Meanwhile, [Time Warner Cable](#)'s Raleigh division is using [Metrobility Optical Systems](#)' "intelligent demarcation" equipment to roll out Dedicated Access IP Services (see [TWC Deploys Metrobility](#)). Using its hybrid fiber-coaxial network, [Time Warner Cable](#) is deploying multiprotocol Ethernet services in the first mile with a barrier between management and customer traffic. That gives it a high level of control and security without routing or entering customer IP space.

The emphasis in all these services is in finding new ways not only to reach more customers, but to differentiate among Ethernet offerings in an increasingly competitive market -- hence the focus on areas like VPLS, multipoint services, wide-area networking, and access over copper. The plain point-to-point service to a few on-net locations isn't quite cutting it for a lot of customers, and *Heavy Reading* expects a lot more of these advanced services to emerge.

— Nicole Willing, Reporter, [Light Reading](#)