

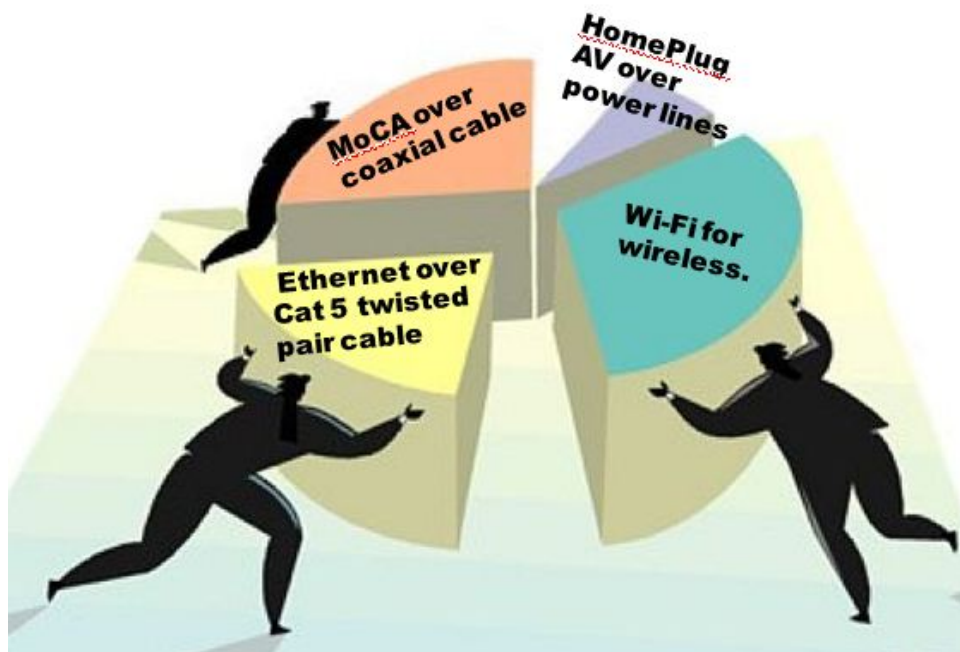
Can IEEE P1905 Unite Home Networking?

Written by Bob Snyder
01 July 2011

IEEE is developing a standard called **P1905**, an abstraction layer allowing devices and services to work **over any of the four main extent home networking technologies** — HomePlug AV over power lines, MoCA over coaxial cable, Ethernet over Cat 5 twisted pair cable and Wi-Fi for wireless.

Paul Houzé of France Telecom-Orange, the Chair of IEEE P1905.1 Working Group, says “Creating a bridge between the world’s most popular wired and wireless technologies will bring much-needed synergy, making home networks easier to use and elevating their overall performance.”

Rather than a gateway or an application to recognize which physical network is present, P1905 brings together the four technologies in a single abstraction layer interface that would use the option available or best-performing option at a particular time.



Sounds good, but why another home networking standard? Because it's now clear that no single physical technology will dominate home networking: several will coexist in many

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individual homes as well as the market in general. And clearly IEEE sees many banner-bearers, they feel there is no victorious unifying solution in sight.

The powerful ITU recently called for a **G.Hn standard**, a universal physical interface designed to integrate coax, power lines, Wi-Fi and Ethernet into a single physical network. P1905 would instead operate at a higher level, rejecting the need for integration at the physical level.

Yet G.Hn components would not be backwards compatible with existing MoCA, HomePlug or Wi-Fi ones. Nor does G.Hn yield any performance improvements over MoCA and the other existing physical standards-- it would simply replaces these by raising an umbrella of an interface.

Instead of adding a new dominant flavor as G.Hn urges, P1902 acts as the ice cream cone that might support a twist of vanilla and chocolate flavors.

Many say the market will choose the winner of this argument. We say the market is a poor chooser (otherwise we wouldn't have this problem in the first place.)

Indeed the market seems to prefer the wild chaos of diversity to the tamer order imposed by a single standard. We will probably see these unifying standards proliferating, running wild and freely co-existing. Just like the technologies they had hoped to lasso and haul into into their own technology corral, these standards will all build and maintain separate corrals, sharing the ranch on the free range known as home networking.

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