

Trio planning to offer ISDN access via frame-relay service

By Bob Wallace

AT&T, WiTel, and CompuServe Inc. are deploying equipment in their networks that will finally enable small offices and telecommuters to use pay-as-you-go ISDN lines to access the carriers' frame-relay services beginning next year.

ISDN access provides users two

64Kbps channels to frame-relay services; this is a midrange access option many users have been looking for, sources said. ISDN links can also be used for low-cost frame-relay backup.

Currently, frame-relay users' only choice is between sluggish 14.4Kbps dial-up access (via modem) and a high-cost dedicated line that provides a minimum bandwidth of 56Kbps.

The coming ISDN option means managers can extend frame-relay networks to smaller remote sites for between \$20 and \$40 per month, as opposed to \$200 to \$300 per month for a dedicated 56Kbps link.

CompuServe's ISDN access will go on-line in the first quarter of 1995; AT&T is promising ISDN-to-frame-relay service by mid-1995. WiTel would

not commit to a date for its ISDN option.

"This [ISDN access to frame relay] is going to blow the frame-relay market wide open," said Michael Finneran, president of dBrn Associates, a Hewlett Neck, N.Y., research firm.

"We probably have five or six sites with 56Kb access lines that would probably be better served using ISDN," said Phil Marzullo, vice president and CIO at Ren Corp., a Nashville, Tenn.-based kidney dialysis firm and long-time WiTel frame-relay user.

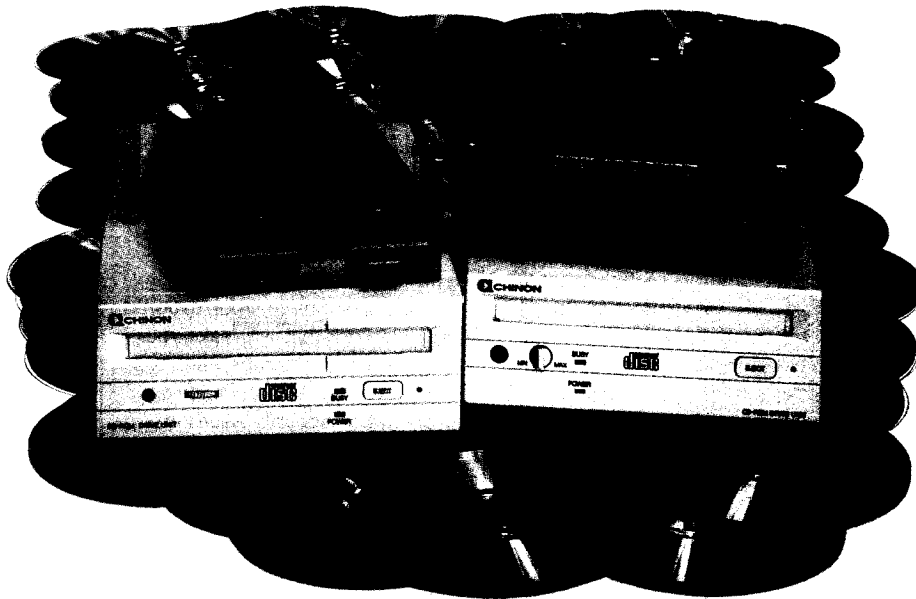
"We also have small clinics ... that are only open three days a week that could use ISDN access," Marzullo said. Ren uses its frame-relay network to carry patients' medical data.

Carriers haven't set pricing for their ISDN-to-frame-relay services. The device that makes the link possible is the Integrated Network Server (INS), developed by StrataCom Inc. and available now for the first time.

Nationwide, telephone companies offer ISDN access to between 40 percent and 80 percent of their customers, with all planning aggressive ISDN deployment during the next several years. (See "Bellcore makes breakthrough in ISDN access," April 4, page 1.)

Vertical Systems Group, a Dedham, Mass.-based consultancy, forecasts that frame-relay service sales will exceed \$1 billion in 1997.

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ColorMatch brings low-cost pre-press to Macintosh users

A low-cost color management software package for the Macintosh that offers users entry-level prepress-quality color matching is now shipping from DayStar Digital Inc.

DayStar's ColorMatch ensures that output from printers, copiers, and film recorders matches as closely as possible what a Mac user sees on a display, said Gary Dailey, director of product management.

At \$219, ColorMatch also costs thousands of dollars less than existing professional color management systems, while offering the same functionality, he added.

ColorMatch allows for much closer matches among a wider range of colors than Apple Computer Inc.'s ColorSync color-matching technology, Dailey said.

ColorMatch will ship with Device Color Profiles, which include profiles for printers and copiers from Eastman Kodak Co. and Canon Inc. and dye-sublimation printers from QMS Inc.

ColorMatch is based on Kodak's Precision Color Management System and currently works only with Quark Inc.'s QuarkXPress and Adobe Systems Inc.'s Photoshop.

ColorMatch will be compatible with ColorSync 2.0, which Apple is expected to ship by year's end. Applications compatible with ColorSync will also be able to work with ColorMatch, DayStar officials said.

— Tom Quinlan