SNS COLLEGE OF TECHNOLOGY
# Coimbatore-35

DEPARTMENT OF INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY
19CSB302- COMPUTER NETWORKS

III YEAR V SEM

Transmission media refer to the physical pathways through which data is transmitted from one device to another within a network. These pathways can be wired or wireless. The choice of medium depends on factors like distance, speed, and interference. In this article, we will discuss the transmission media.

A transmission medium is a physical path between the transmitter and the receiver i.e. it is the channel through which data is sent from one place to another. Transmission Media is broadly classified into the following types:
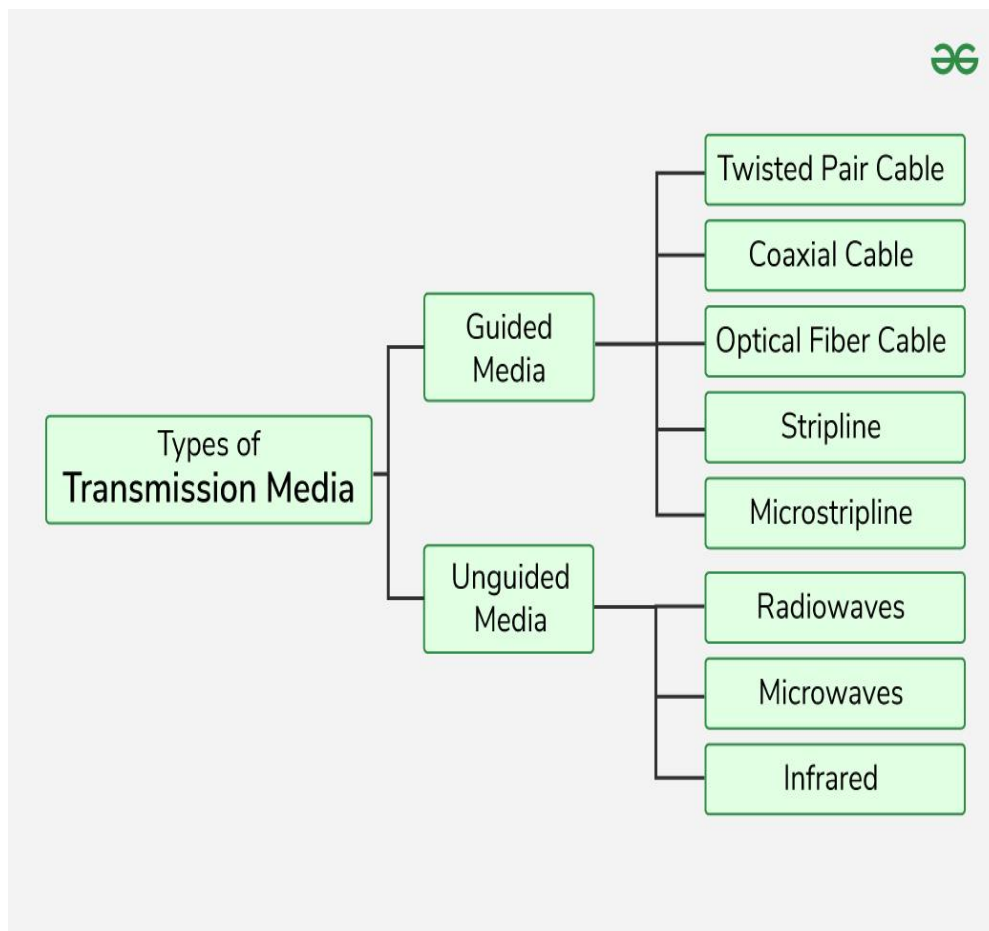
Types of Transmission Media

1. Guided Media

Guided Media is also referred to as Wired or Bounded transmission media. Signals being transmitted are directed and confined in a narrow pathway by using physical links.

Features:

- High Speed
- Secure
- Used for comparatively shorter distances

There are 3 major types of Guided Media:

Twisted Pair Cable

It consists of 2 separately insulated conductor wires wound about each other. Generally, several such pairs are bundled together in a protective sheath. They are the most widely used Transmission Media. Twisted Pair is of two types:

- **Unshielded Twisted Pair (UTP):** UTP consists of two insulated copper wires twisted around one another. This type of cable has the ability to block interference and does not depend on a physical shield for this purpose. It is used for telephonic applications.
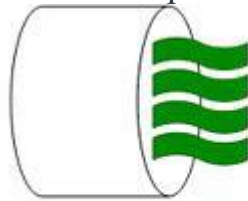
Unshielded Twisted Pair

Unshielded Twisted Pair

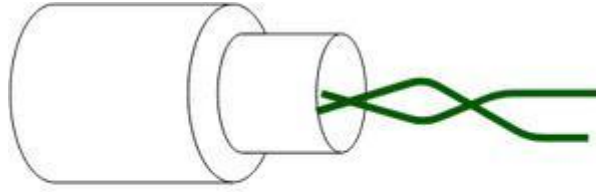### Advantages of Unshielded Twisted Pair

Least expensive

- Easy to install
- High-speed capacity

Disadvantages of Unshielded Twisted Pair

Susceptible to external interference

- Lower capacity and performance in comparison to STP
- Short distance transmission due to attenuation

Shielded Twisted Pair

Shielded Twisted Pair (STP): This type of cable consists of a special jacket (a copper braid covering or a foil shield) to block external interference. It is used in fast-data-rate Ethernet and in voice and data channels of telephone lines.

Advantages of Shielded Twisted Pair

- Better performance at a higher data rate in comparison to UTP
- Eliminates crosstalk
- Comparatively faster

Disadvantages of Shielded Twisted Pair

- Comparatively difficult to install and manufacture
- More expensive
- Bulky

Coaxial Cable

It has an outer plastic covering containing an insulation layer made of PVC or Teflon and 2 parallel conductors each having a separate insulated protection cover. The coaxial cable transmits information in two modes: Baseband mode(dedicated cable bandwidth) and Broadband mode(cable bandwidth is split into separate ranges). Cable TVs and analog television networks widely use Coaxial cables.
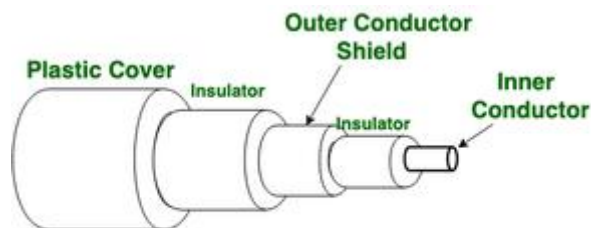

Figure of Coaxial Cable

Advantages of Coaxial Cable

Coaxial cables support high bandwidth .

- It is easy to install coaxial cables.
- Coaxial cables have better cut-through resistance so they are more reliable and durable.
- Less affected by noise or cross-talk or electromagnetic inference.
- Coaxial cables support multiple channels

Disadvantages of Coaxial Cable

- Coaxial cables are expensive.
- The coaxial cable must be grounded in order to prevent any crosstalk.
- As a Coaxial cable has multiple layers it is very bulky.
- There is a chance of breaking the coaxial cable and attaching a "t-joint" by hackers, this compromises the security of the data.

Optical Fiber Cable

Optical Fibre Cable_uses the concept of refraction of light through a core made up of glass or plastic. The core is surrounded by a less dense glass or plastic covering called the cladding. It is used for the transmission of large volumes of data. The cable can be unidirectional or bidirectional. The WDM (Wavelength Division Multiplexer) supports two modes, namely unidirectional and bidirectional mode.
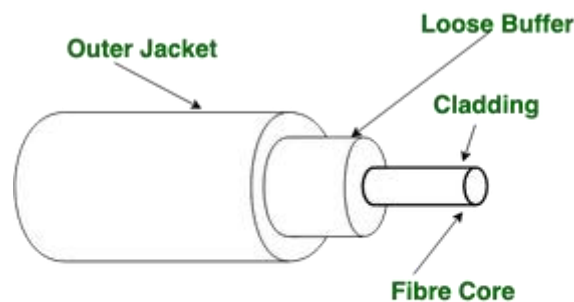

Figure of Optical Fibre Cable

Advantages of Optical Fibre Cable

- Increased capacity and bandwidth
- Lightweight
- Less signal attenuation
- Immunity to electromagnetic interference
- Resistance to corrosive materials

Disadvantages of Optical Fibre Cable

- Difficult to install and maintain
- High cost
- Fragile

Applications of Optical Fibre Cable

- **Medical Purpose:** Used in several types of medical instruments.
- **Defence Purpose:** Used in transmission of data in aerospace.
- **For Communication:** This is largely used in formation of internet cables.
- **Industrial Purpose:** Used for lighting purposes and safety measures in designing the interior and exterior of automobiles.

Stripline

Stripline is a transverse electromagnetic (TEM) transmission line medium invented by Robert M. Barrett of the Air Force Cambridge Research Centre in the 1950s. Stripline is the earliest form of the planar transmission line. It uses a conducting material to transmit high-frequency waves it is also called a waveguide. This conducting material is sandwiched between two layers of the ground plane which are usually shorted to provide EMI immunity.

Microstripline

In this, the conducting material is separated from the ground plane by a layer of dielectric.

2. Unguided Media

It is also referred to as Wireless or Unbounded transmission media . No physical medium is required for the transmission of electromagnetic signals.

Features of Unguided Media

- The signal is broadcasted through air
- Less Secure
- Used for larger distances

There are 3 types of Signals transmitted through unguided media:

Radio Waves

Radio waves are easy to generate and can penetrate through buildings. The sending and receiving antennas need not be aligned. Frequency Range:3KHz – 1GHz. AM and FM radios and cordless phones use Radio waves for transmission.
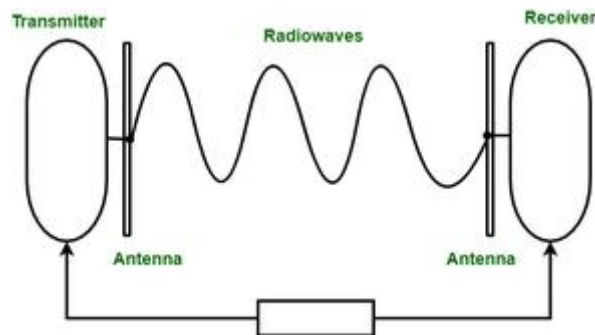
Further Categorized as Terrestrial and Satellite.

Microwaves

It is a line of sight transmission i.e. the sending and receiving antennas need to be properly aligned with each other. The distance covered by the signal is directly proportional to the height of the antenna. Frequency Range:1GHz – 300GHz. Micro waves are majorly used for mobile phone communication and television distribution.
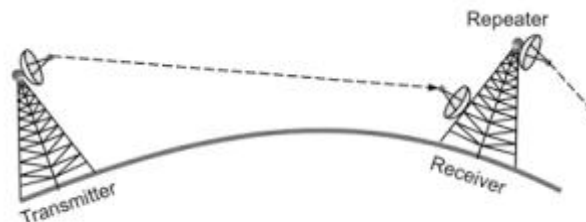

Fig: Microwave Transmission

Infrared

Infrared waves are used for very short distance communication. They cannot penetrate through obstacles. This prevents interference between systems. Frequency Range:300GHz – 400THz. It is used in TV remotes, wireless mouse, keyboard, printer, etc.

Television

Infrared Radiations

Remote

Factors Considered for Designing the Transmission Media

- **Bandwidth:** Assuming all other conditions remain constant, the greater a medium's bandwidth, the faster a signal's data transmission rate.
- **Transmission Impairment** : Transmission Impairment occurs when the received signal differs from the transmitted signal. Signal quality will be impacted as a result of transmission impairment.
- **Interference:** Interference is defined as the process of disturbing a signal as it travels over a communication medium with the addition of an undesired signal.

Causes of Transmission Impairment

Impairment Causes

Attenuation   Distortion   Noise
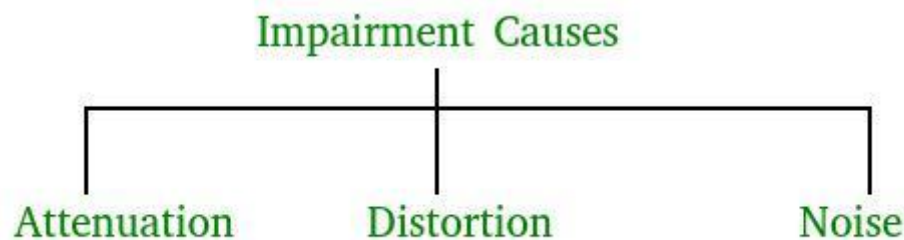
- **Attenuation –** It means loss of energy. The strength of signal decreases with increasing distance which causes loss of energy in overcoming resistance of medium. This is also known as attenuated signal. Amplifiers are used to amplify the attenuated signal which gives the original signal back and compensate for this loss.
- **Distortion –** It means changes in the form or shape of the signal. This is generally seen in composite signals made up with different

frequencies. Each frequency component has its own propagation speed travelling through a medium. And thats why it delay in arriving at the final destination Every component arrive at different time which leads to distortion. Therefore, they have different phases at receiver end from what they had at senders end.

- **Noise** – The random or unwanted signal that mixes up with the original signal is called noise. There are several types of noise such as induced noise, crosstalk noise, thermal noise and impulse noise which may corrupt the signal.

Network Devices: Network devices, also known as networking hardware, are physical devices that allow hardware on a computer network to communicate and interact with one another. For example Repeater, Hub, Bridge, Switch, Routers, Gateway, Brouter, and NIC, etc.

1. Repeater – A repeater operates at the physical layer. Its job is to amplifies (i.e., regenerates) the signal over the same network before the signal becomes too weak or corrupted to extend the length to which the signal can be transmitted over the same network. When the signal becomes weak, they copy it bit by bit and regenerate it at its star topology connectors connecting following the original strength. It is a 2-port device.

2. Hub – A hub is a basically multi-port repeater. A hub connects multiple wires coming from different branches, for example, the connector in star topology which connects different stations. Hubs cannot filter data, so data packets are sent to all connected devices.

Types of Hub

- **Active Hub:-** These are the hubs that have their power supply and can clean, boost, and relay the signal along with the network. It serves both as a repeater as well as a wiring center. These are used to extend the maximum distance between nodes.
- **Passive Hub:-** These are the hubs that collect wiring from nodes and power supply from the active hub. These hubs relay signals onto the network without cleaning and boosting them and can't be used to extend the distance between nodes.
- **Intelligent Hub:-** It works like an active hub and includes remote management capabilities. They also provide flexible data rates to network devices. It also enables an administrator to monitor the traffic passing through the hub and to configure each port in the hub.

3. Bridge – A bridge operates at the data link layer. A bridge is a repeater, with add on the functionality of filtering content by reading the MAC addresses of the source and destination. It is also used for interconnecting two LANs working on the same protocol. It has a single input and single output port, thus making it a 2 port device.

4. Switch – A switch is a multi port bridge with a buffer and a design that can boost its efficiency(a large number of ports imply less traffic) and performance. A switch is a data link layer device. The switch can perform error checking before forwarding data, which makes it very efficient as it does not forward packets that have errors and forward good packets selectively to the correct port only.

5. Routers – A router is a device like a switch that routes data packets based on their IP addresses. The router is mainly a Network Layer device. Routers normally connect LANs and WANs and have a dynamically updating routing table based on which they make decisions on routing the data packets. The router divides the broadcast domains of hosts connected through it.
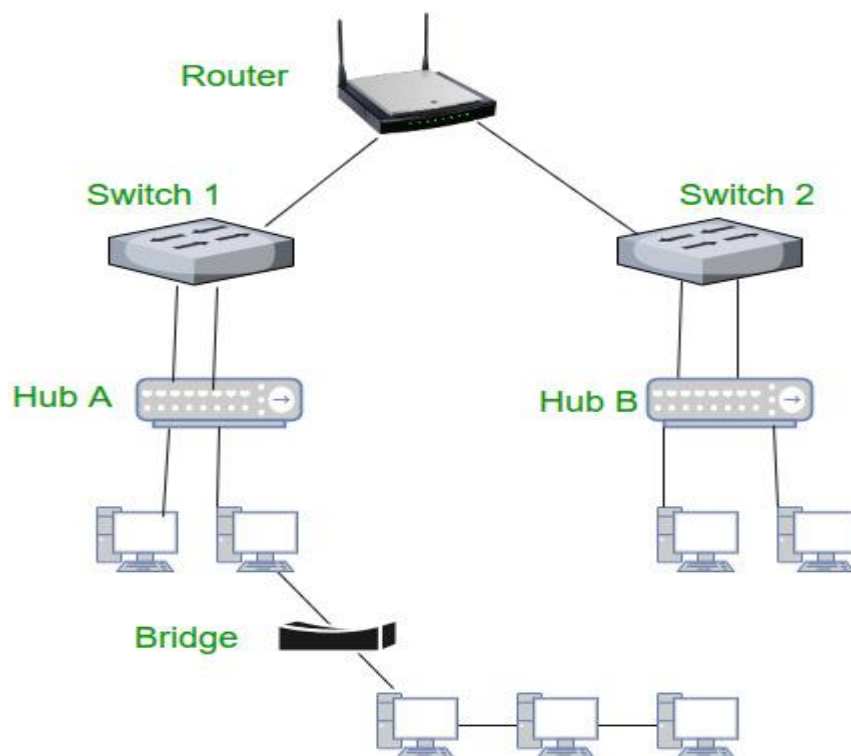
6. Gateway – A gateway, as the name suggests, is a passage to connect two networks that may work upon different networking models. They work as messenger agents that take data from one system, interpret it, and transfer it to another system. Gateways are also called protocol converters and can operate at any network layer. Gateways are generally more complex than switches or routers.

7. Brouter – It is also known as the bridging router is a device that combines features of both bridge and router. It can work either at the data link layer or a network layer. Working as a router, it is capable of routing packets across networks and working as the bridge, it is capable of filtering local area network traffic.

8. NIC – NIC or network interface card is a network adapter that is used to connect the computer to the network. It is installed in the computer to establish a LAN. It has a unique id that is written on the chip, and it has a connector to connect the cable to it. The cable acts as an interface between the computer and the router or modem. NIC card is a layer 2 device which means that it works on both the physical and data link layers of the network model.