PART 1

OVERVIEW OF THE COMMUNICATION FACILITIES

Communications networks consist of terminal devices, transmission facilities, signaling systems, and switching systems. Almost invariably, the human recipient and source are implied. The older trend has been to tailor the communicating systems to serve as an error free medium which could be invoked at will to let any one "talk" to any one else at any time. More recently, video, computer, and other data communication have started to exert their own particular needs and protocol. In this part, the infrastructure of most of the existing communication networks that permit exchange of information is presented. The evolutionary nature of these systems in view of the changing social needs and expectations from the communication systems is also presented. The oldest of these plain old telephone service networks is the POTS network. Whereas it existed earlier to serve as a circuit switched voice transport facility, the POTS network now carries significant amounts of data and is turning all digital, in spite of ample analog systems and devices within its infrastructure. The existing, the evolving, and the transitory aspects of the communication networks are present in this part.