inexpensive high speed packet is here

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Yes, that's right. It is so close to home you may not even realize its potential ham implementations.

What I am talking about is all of the Part 15 spread spectrum wireless Ethernet devices. There are numerous manufacturers of these devices. They operate on the shared 900-MHz, 2.4-GHz and 5.7-GHz bands with speeds between 1.5 and 11 Mbps! The common 802.11b devices are 11 Mbps and six of the 11 user settable channels operate in overlapping ham allocations.

The beauty of this kind of operation is that those with no desire to "get technical" can do it Numerous hams have reported successful 10 to 15-mile paths by attaching nothing more than a higher gain antenna to the devices.

This idea is nothing new. In fact, 13 years ago Al Broscious, N3CFT, suggested this very idea at a computer conference. But at the time, amateur spread spectrum rules were more restrictive and prohibited certain spreading codes. Nonetheless, TAPR attempted to urge interested hams to obtain Special Temporary Authorization (STA) from the FCC.

Well, a few years have past, the ham rules have been relaxed and the price of this technology has come down considerably. Now, for about \$150, you can pick something up locally and throw in a \$60 to \$70 24-dB parabolic antenna. Then, you are all set to build that highspeed affordable RF network, where you can mimic the Internet with Web pages, conferencing, FTP and so on.

There is absolutely no reason not to explore this technology. You can port existing AX.25 traffic over a wireless Ethernet link using AXIP encapsulation.

For further information and details, refer to:

Using Part 15 Wireless Ethernet Devices for Amateur Radio (www.qsl.net/kb9mwr/projects/wireless/plan.htm)

Amateur Broadband Radio Network (www.abrn.org)

Green Bay Professional Packet Radio (www.gbppr.org)