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Celebration for Ethernet's 40th birthday

On May 22nd 2013, Bob Metcalfe, co-inventor of Ethernet will host a gala celebration for the technology's 40th birthday.

It's been a very long journey from a group of guys (including Bob Metcalfe and David Boggs) in a small room at the Palo Alto Research Center (PARC) in 1973 to where Ethernet is today.

Some of us are old enough to have worked with the original thick Ethernet technology, complete with "vampire taps" and cable marked with valid insertion points at every one foot along it. It ran at a grand total of (count 'em) 2.5Mb/sec.

Later, we progressed to thin Ethernet, sometimes referred to as "cheapernet." This was simpler to construct, and ran at the blazing speed of 10Mb/sec!

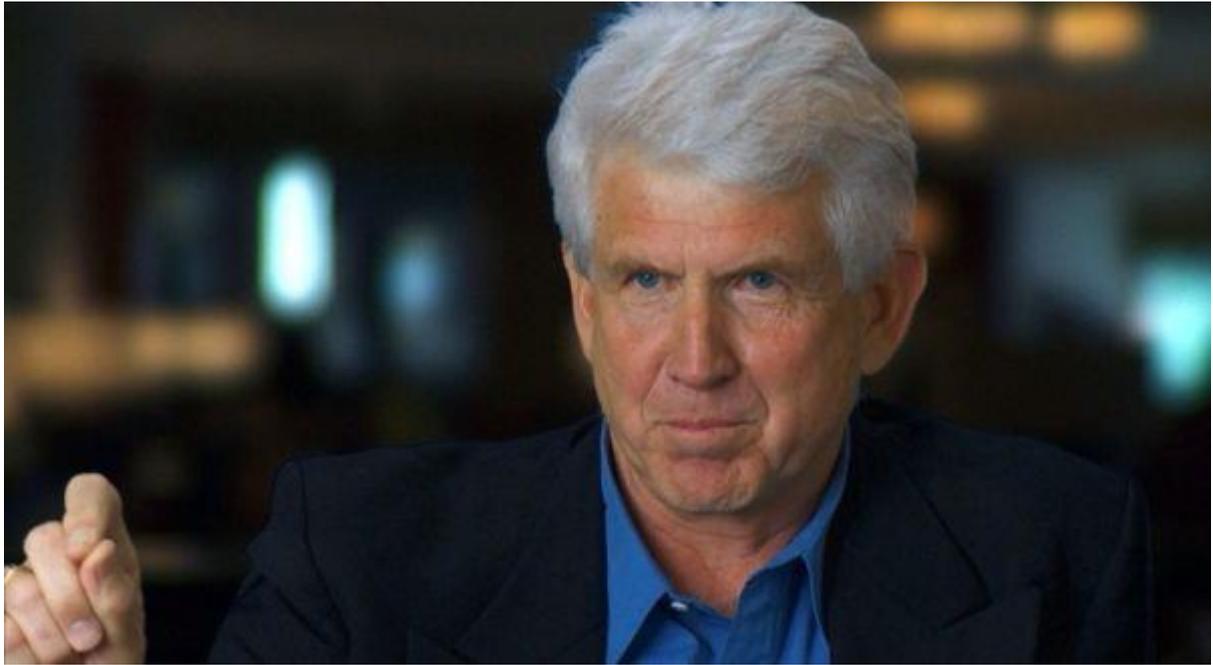
During its history, Ethernet has seen off challenges from the likes of Token Ring (developed by IBM and supported by very few other companies), from ArcNet and a few others too minor to name!

Pretty-much throughout its history, Ethernet has been the dominant on-the-wire data communications technology and has progressed through an enormous number of iterations to achieve the blindingly fast current maximum of 100Gb/sec - 40,000 times faster than the original technology. And many would argue that's not nearly fast enough for current needs.

The move from co-axial technologies to UTP cabling enabled these huge increases in speed, giving us the ubiquitous "blue cable."

Since its original development, Ethernet has evolved into a wide variety of uses never envisioned by its inventors. To give just one example, our very own NBN is a metropolitan area Ethernet installation, delivering an Ethernet socket in the wall of our home. No protocol conversions or little grey boxes between the wall and the computer, nothing - raw Ethernet into every home or business in the country.

Announced at the NetEvents conference in Phuket today, and to be hosted in a combined operation between **PARC** and the **Computer History Museum** and supported by NetEvents and MEF, this event for invited guests will be a major celebration and also a charity fund-raising event for the museum with many of the luminaries donating their time for an auction. For instance, we are told that a private dinner with Metcalfe himself is up for grabs.



The event will comprise three parts:

1. Ethernet Innovation Conference organised by PARC
2. Charity Gala Dinner and Ethernet Birthday Party in aid of the STEM education initiative
3. Global Press & Analyst Summit – a series of scheduled briefings with 60+ business technology press and analysts from more than 30 countries across the globe

The author attended the conference as a guest of NetEvents.