

# Computer Networks

## Physical Layer - Technologies

Prof. Dr. Oliver Hahm

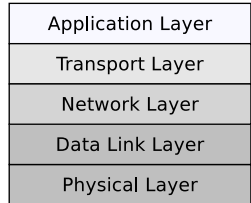
Frankfurt University of Applied Sciences  
Faculty 2: Computer Science and Engineering  
`oliver.hahm@fb2.fra-uas.de`  
<https://teaching.dahahm.de>

November 04, 2022

# Recap: Physical Layer

- **Transmits the ones and zeros**
  - **Physical connection** to the network
  - Conversion of data into **signals**
- Protocol and transmission medium specify among others:
  - The data encoding on the transmission medium
  - The directional dependence of data transmission
  - The mechanical and electronic aspects (e.g., access point plug design, pin usage)

## Hybrid Reference Model



# Agenda

## ■ Transmission Media

- Guided Transmission Media
- Unguided Transmission Media
- The Last Mile

## ■ Technologies

- Ethernet
- Token Ring
- Wireless Local Area Network (WLAN)
- Bluetooth







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# Coaxial Cables (*Coax Cables*)



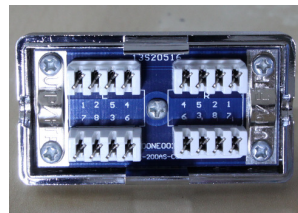
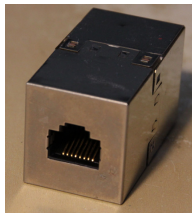
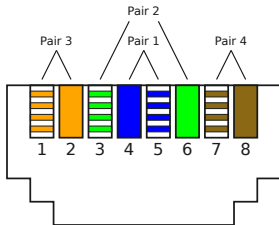
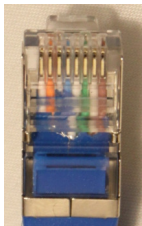
↑ Pastic jacket (PVC)      ↑ Outer conductor 'Shield' (aluminium)      ↑ Insulator (PE)      ↑ Inner conductor 'Core' (copper)

- Bipolar cable with concentric (**coaxial**) structure
- The inner conductor (**core**) carries the electrical signals
- The outer conductor (**shield**) is kept at ground potential and completely surrounds the inner conductor
  - The shielding of the signal-carrying conductor by the outer conductor that is kept at ground potential, reduces electromagnetic interferences



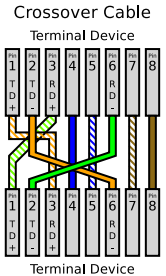
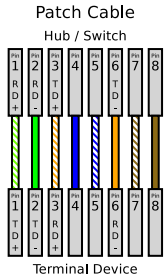
# Twisted Pair Cables

- The wires of twisted-pair cables are **pairwise twisted** with each other.
- Twisted pairs are better **protected against alternating magnetic fields and electrostatic interferences** from the outside than parallel signal wires
- All variants of the Ethernet standard, that use twisted pair cables as transmission medium, use plugs and jacks according to the standard 8P8C, which are usually called **RJ45** (Registered Jack)



# Crossover Cables and Patch Cables

- A **Crossover cable** can connect 2 terminal devices directly
  - It connects the send and receive lines of both devices
- To connect more than just 2 network devices, **patch cables** are used
  - In this case, a **hub** or a **switch** is required

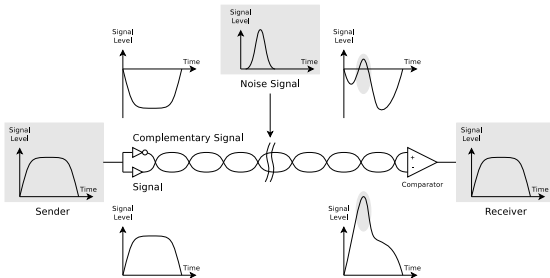


- Some hubs and switches provide an **uplink port** for connecting another hub or switch
  - The uplink port is internally crossed
- Most modern network devices support **Auto-MDIX** which allows to automatically detect the send and receive wires of connected network devices

# Complementary Signal

Source: Jörg Rech. Ethernet. Heise. 2008 and Wikipedia

- Via the wire pair a complementary signal is sent (on one wire 0 V to +2.8 V and on the other wire 0 V to -2.8 V)
  - This allows the receiver to filter out interfering signals
  - Furthermore, it reduces electromagnetic emission



- The signal level of line A = Payload Signal + Noise
- The signal level of line B = -Payload Signal + Noise

- The difference of the signal levels of line A and line B at receiver side is:
 
$$[+ \text{Payload Signal} + \text{Noise}] - [- \text{Payload Signal} + \text{Noise}] = 2 * \text{Payload Signal}$$
- Result: Regardless of the level of the noise signal, the difference between the payload signal and the complementary signal remains the same



# Categories of Twisted Pair Cables

- Different categories of twisted pair cables exist
- The performance of a network connection is determined by the component of the lowest category
  - Category 1/2/3/4 are only used for telephone cables today
  - Category 5/5e are common in most current LANs <sup>1</sup>
  - Category 6/6A are compatible with up to 10 Gbps over 100 m
  - Category 7/7A do not offer benefits over Cat-6A cables
  - Category 8 are designed for data centers and support to  $\approx 30$  m length

Main differences (of the structure) between the categories: number of twists per wire length (cm) and thickness of the jacket

- More twists per cm  $\implies$  less interference (noise)
- Cat 5/5e has 1-2 twists per cm. Cat 6 has 2 or more twists per cm
- Thickness of the cladding  $\implies$  less crosstalk
- Crosstalk is the mutual interference of parallel lines

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<sup>1</sup>Cat5e is guaranteed Gigabit Ethernet-compatible

## Information printed on Twisted Pair Cables (1/2)

Do you understand the most important cable characteristics that are printed on twisted pair cables?

Example: E188601 (UL) TYPE CM 75°C LL84201 CSA TYPE CMG FT4 CAT.5E PATCH CABLE TO TIA/EIA 568A STP 26AWG STRANDED

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- PATCH/CROSS/CROSSOVER: see slide 10
- UTP/STP/FTP/SFTP: see slide 12
- CAT5/5E/6/7/8: see slide 13
- 24AWG/26AWG/28AWG: American wire gauge (AWG) informs about the diameters of the wires
  - 24AWG = 0.51054 mm, 26AWG = 0.405 mm, 28AWG = 0.321 mm
  - Larger wire diameter  $\implies$  less electrical resistance for the electronic signals  $\implies$  lower attenuation
  - Thinner cables block airflow in server racks less and simplify the installation

## Information printed on Twisted Pair Cables (2/2)

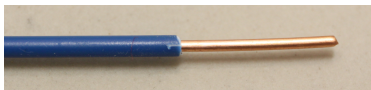
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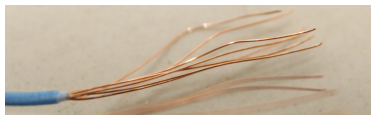
- **60°C/75°C**: Temperature information stands for flame tests
- **SOLID/STRANDED**

**Solid** cables use solid copper wires. Such cables are well suited for permanent infrastructure installation. They have a lower attenuation and cost less compared to stranded cables

**Stranded** cables consist of multiple strands of wires wrapped around each other. They are typically used to create patch cables because they are very flexible. Attenuation of stranded cables is higher compared to solid cables. Thus, they are used for shorter distances.



Solid cable



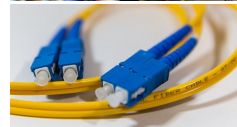
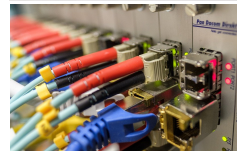
Stranded cable



# Fiber-optic Cables

Image Source: pixabay.com (CC0)

- Often called **optical fiber**
- Transfer data by using **light**
  - Light source: Normal LED or laser LED
  - Use wavelengths of 850, 1300 or 1550 nm
  - Propagation speed of the light in the glass: about 200,000 km/s
- Advantages over coaxial and twisted pair cables
  - Provide high data rates over large distances
  - Create no electromagnetic emission
  - Insensitive against electromagnetic influences
- Drawbacks:
  - Higher cost for cabling and active components (LEDs)
  - Existing twisted pair cable infrastructures can not be used
- Used only when copper cables cannot provide enough bandwidth

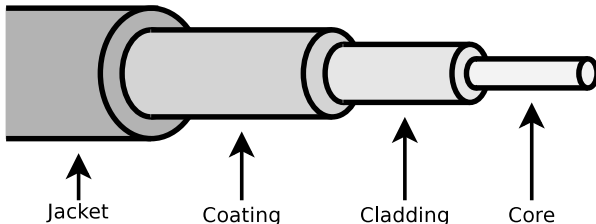


# Structure of Fiber-optic Cables

Image Source (cable): pxhere.com (CC0)

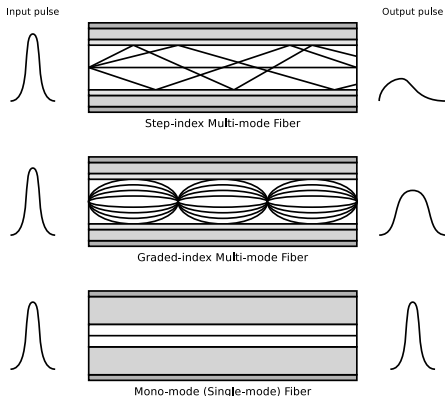
## ■ Components of an optical fiber (from inside to outside):

- 1 Light-transmitting (**core**) made of quartz glass
- 2 The core is surrounded by a **cladding** layer
  - The refractive index of the core must be greater than that of the cladding to enclose the optical signal
- 3 The core is surrounded by a **coating** layer that protects it from moisture and physical damage
- 4 The final layer is the outer **jacket** to protect the inner layers



# Multi-mode Fibers and Mono-mode (Single-mode) Fibers

- Structure, dimensions and refractive index of core and cladding specify the number of **propagation modes**, by which light can propagate along the fiber
  - Each mode corresponds to one path in the optical fiber



- Multi-mode Fibers** provide up to several thousand propagation modes and **mono-mode (single-mode) fibers** only a single one
  - Short distance ( $\approx < 500$  m)
    - $\Rightarrow$  multi-mode fibers
  - Long distance ( $\approx < 70$  km)
    - $\Rightarrow$  mono-mode fibers

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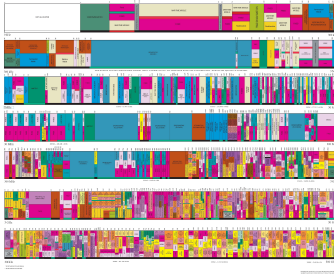
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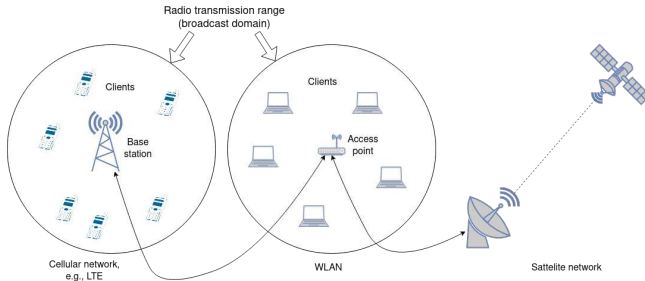
# Wireless Communication

## UNITED STATES FREQUENCY ALLOCATIONS

### THE RADIO SPECTRUM



- Medium is an **electromagnetic wave**
- Data is **modulated**
- The range depends on **signal power** and **environment**
- Can be **directed** or **undirected**



# Challenges of Wireless Networks (1/2)

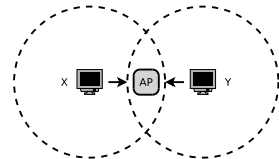
- 1 Fading over distance (decreasing signal strength)
  - Electromagnetic waves are gradually weakened by physical barriers (e.g., walls) and in free space

Source: Computernetzwerke, *James F. Kurose, Keith W. Ross*, Pearson (2008)

# Challenges of Wireless Networks (1/2)

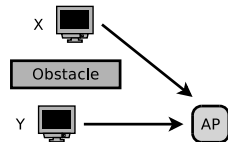
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## 2 Hidden terminal problem (invisible or hidden terminal devices)

- Terminal devices, communicating with the same device (e.g., an access point), do not recognize each other and therefore **interfere** with each other

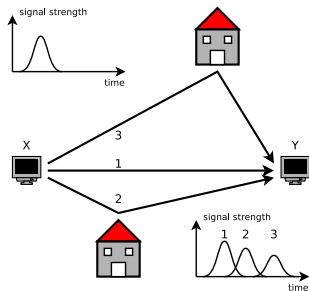


Source: Computernetzwerke, James F. Kurose, Keith W. Ross, Pearson (2008)

# Challenges of Wireless Networks (2/2)

## 3 Multipath propagation

- Electromagnetic waves are reflected and therefore go paths of different lengths from the sender to the destination
  - Result: A difficult to interpret signal arrives at the receiver because the reflections influence subsequent transmissions
- Similar problem: If objects move between sender and receiver, the propagation paths may change



## 4 External Interference

- Examples: WLAN and Bluetooth operate in the same **spectrum**
- Also **electromagnetic noise**, caused by motors or microwave ovens can cause interferences

Source: Computernetzwerke, James F. Kurose, Keith W. Ross, Pearson (2008)



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# Bridging the Last Mile

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- Most common solutions
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
- Other solutions

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- Satellite E.g., using television satellites

- Wireless E.g., WiMAX, directed WIFI

- Fiber Requires infrastructure expansion



# Digital Subscriber Line

- Use the whole spectrum of the copper cable
- Downstream modulation via **DSL modem**, upstream modulation via **DSL Access Multiplexer (DSLAM)**
- Modulation with **Discrete Multi-tone Modulation (DMT)** or **Carrierless Amplitude Phase Modulation (CAP)**
- Data rate depends on distance to the **switching center** and the **cable quality**
- The **VDSL2** (Very high bit rate digital subscriber line 2) standard allows up to 100 Mbps at 500 m (using frequencies up to 30 MHz) <sup>2</sup>



Source: Wikipedia, CC 2.0

<sup>2</sup>ITU recommendation G.993.2, published in 2006



# 3GPP Standards

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**5G:** up to 10 Gbps with a focus on **IoT** and  
**M2M** applications





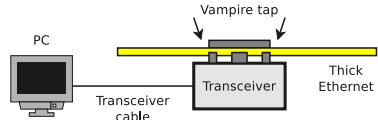






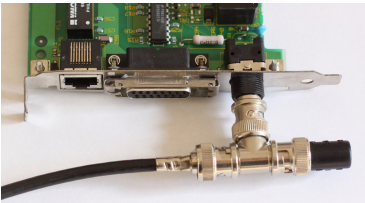
# Coaxial Cable for 10BASE5 – Thick Ethernet

- 10BASE5 (*Yellow Cable* or *Thick Ethernet*)
- 10 mm thick **coaxial** cable (RG-8) with 50 ohm impedance
- For connecting terminal devices, a hole must be drilled into the cable through the outer shielding to contact the inner conductor
- Through the hole, the **transceiver** is connected via a **vampire tap** with the inner conductor
- The terminal device is connected via a transceiver cable, called **AUI** (Attachment Unit Interface) with the transceiver



# Coaxial Cable for 10BASE2 – Thin Ethernet

- The hardware required for Thick Ethernet is cost intensive
- A less expensive solution is 10BASE2
  - It is called **Thin Ethernet**, *ThinWire* and sometimes *Cheapernet*
- 6 mm thick **coaxial** cable (RG-58) with 50 ohm impedance
  - The cables are thinner and more flexible, and therefore more simple to install
- Cables and devices have **BNC connectors** (Bayonet Neill Concelman)
- T-Connectors are used to connect devices with the transmission medium
- Terminators (50 ohm) are used to prevent reflections

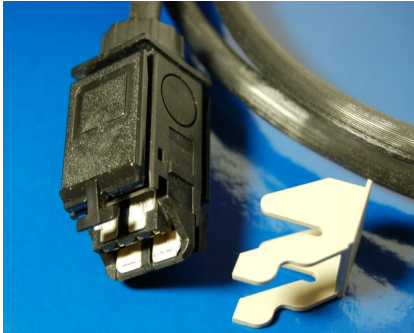








# Token Ring (IEEE 802.5)



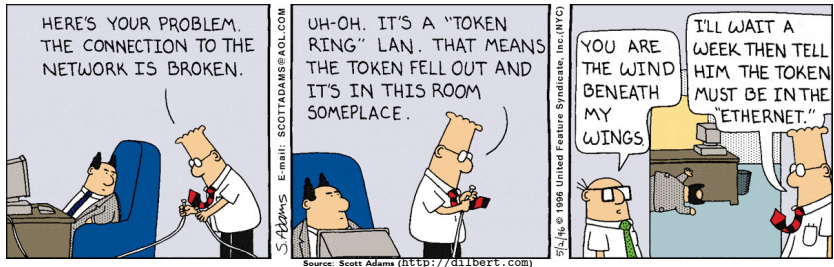
Source: Wikipedia, Ian Wilson, CC 3.0



Source: Wikipedia, public domain

# The evolution of Token Ring

- 1981: Developed by the English company **Procom**
- From the mid-1980s: Further development by **IBM**
  - 1985: Introduced with **4 Mbps** for the original IBM PC
  - 1989: **16 Mbps**
  - 1998: **100 Mbps**
- Until the mid-1990s: IBM's **preferred networking technology**
  - **Obsolete**, since IBM stopped the marketing and distribution in 2004
- IBM "Type-1", a heavy two-pair 150 Ohm shielded twisted pair cable







# WLAN (IEEE 802.11)

- The most frequently used wireless LAN technology
- **Wi-Fi** is a marketing brand
- Current specifications allow up to 7 Gbps
- Multiple communication models:
  - Infrastructure mode** Clients connect to an **Access Point (AP)**
  - Ad-hoc mode** Clients can form a mesh network





# Transmission Power of WLAN

Image Source: Google Image Search

- WLAN is designed for use inside buildings
  - For this reason, it transmits with a relative low transmission power (up to 100 mW at 2.4 GHz and 1 W at 5 GHz)
    - Such transmission power levels are considered safe for health
    - For comparison, the transmission power of GSM phones, that operate in the frequency range 880-960 MHz, is about 2 W
  - Some WLAN devices for 2.4 GHz provide a higher transmission power
    - Operating such devices is illegal in many countries  $\implies$  slide 44



**Wifi Verstärker 1000mW**

Professionell WLAN Booster / Verstärker 1000mW (30dBm) 2,4GHz 802.11b/g bis 108Mbps

**Ihre Vorteile:**

- Erweitert die Reichweite Ihres WLAN Netzwerks
- Erhöht die Signalstärke des Transmitters
- Kompatibel mit 54Mbps Geschwindigkeit (IEEE 802.11g)
- Unterstützt alle Standards (IEEE 802.11b/g/n)
- Keine zusätzliche Konfiguration
- Ein Antennenverstärker 30dBm Signal

**Jetzt mit 30dBm und 2000mW!**

**Lieferumfang:**

- 1. WLAN Verstärker
- 2. Antennenkabel
- 3. Bedienungsanleitung

ALFA NETWORK

**ALFA NETWORK**

**1000mW 5dBi**

**Plus Mount!**

ALFA NETWORK

Microsoft Windows Vista



# Measuring Vehicle of the Federal Network Agency



Seen in Ludwigshafen-Oggersheim (November 26th, 2018)

# WLAN Standards, Frequencies and Channels

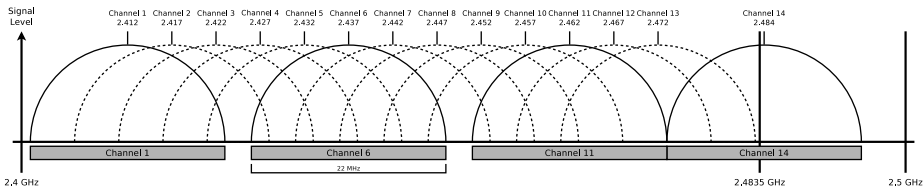
- Most WLAN standards use the frequency blocks 2.4000-2.4835 GHz and 5.150-5.725 GHz in the microwave range
  - The standards differ among others in the frequency blocks used, data rates and modulation methods, as well as the resulting channel width

IEEE Standard	Standard since	Frequencies	
		2.4 GHz	5 GHz
802.11	1997	X	
802.11a	1999		X
802.11b	1999	X	
802.11g	2003	X	
802.11n	2009	X	X
802.11ac	2013		X

Despite the fact that WLAN is used worldwide, legal differences exist

Example: In Germany, using 5.15-5.35 GHz is only allowed in enclosed rooms with 200 mW maximum transmission power

# Non-overlapping Channels of IEEE 802.11b



- IEEE 802.11b uses the Direct Sequence Spread Spectrum (DSSS) modulation scheme with 22 MHz wide channels and 5 MHz channel spacing
  - Thus, only 3 (EU and U.S.) or 4 (Japan) channels exist, whose signals (in theory) do not overlap
    - Channel 1, 6, 11 and 14 (only in Japan)
- Good channel assignment is crucial in dense networks (e.g., hotels, conference centers, apartment buildings)

# IEEE 802.11n – Multiple Input Multiple Output (MIMO)

- MIMO uses up to **four antennas**
- These can be used in **different frequency blocks** in 2.4 GHz and 5 GHz in **parallel**
- In 802.11n MIMO increases the gross data rate to up to **600 Mbps**
- With each parallel data stream (antenna), a maximum data rate (gross) of 150 Mbps can be achieved and up to 4 data streams can be bundled



Img. source: pixabay.com

(CC0)

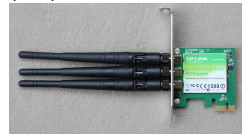


Image source: Christian Baun

# WLAN Security

- 802.11 implements the security standard **Wired Equivalent Privacy (WEP)**
  - Based on the **RC4** algorithm
  - Works with **static keys** that have a length of 40-bit or 104-bit
  - The mechanism can be **cracked** in reasonable time because of the predictable protocol headers
- More modern security standards are **Wi-Fi Protected Access (WPA)**
  - 1/2/3
  - Original WPA is based on the RC4 algorithm, WPA2 uses the **Advanced Encryption Standard (AES)**
  - Works with **dynamic keys** (based on **Temporal Key Integrity Protocol (TKIP)** or encrypting each data packet with a different key)
  - WPA2 includes the more secure encryption protocol **Counter-Mode/CBC-Mac Protocol (CCMP)**
  - WPA3 replaces the **Pre-shared key (PSK)** exchange with **Simultaneous Authentication of Equals (SAE)**
  - WPA2 encryption with a sufficiently long password is still considered secure, WPA1 not
  - Instead of PSK a **RADIUS** authentication server (**WPA-Enterprise**) or **Wi-Fi Protected Setup (WPS)** can be used for key distribution



# Bluetooth

- Wireless network system for **short distance** data transmission → BANs
  - It is designed to replace short cable connections between different devices
- Development was initiated by the Swedish company **Ericsson** in 1994
  - Further development is done by the **Bluetooth SIG (Special Interest Group)**



Source: Wikipedia, CC 2.0

Bluetooth is named after the Danish Viking King Harald Bluetooth

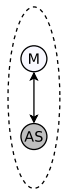
He was famous among other things for his communication skills

- Bluetooth devices use the frequency block 2.402-2.480 GHz
- **Frequency hopping** is used to avoid interference with, for instance, WLAN

# Network Topologies of Bluetooth (1/2)

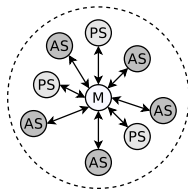
- Bluetooth devices organize themselves in so-called **piconets**
  - A piconet consists of up to 255 nodes
  - One active node is the **master**, the others are **slaves**
    - The master can change the status of the other nodes (activate/deactivate)
- Each Bluetooth device can be registered in multiple piconets
- If a node in range of 2 piconets, it can combine them to a **Scatternet**

**Piconet**



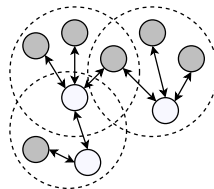
1 Master  
1 Slave

**Piconet**



1 Master  
5 Active Slaves  
3 Parked Slaves

**Scatternet**



3 Piconets



# The Evolution of Bluetooth

- Development started in 1989 at Ericsson for wireless headsets
- The first consumer device (a headset) was launched in 1999
- Initial data rate is some hundred kbps
- Version 2.0 introduces **Enhanced Data Rate (EDR)** and allows for up to 2.1 Mbps
- In 2010 Bluetooth 4.0 was published and introduced **Bluetooth Low Energy (BLE)**
- **RFC 7668** is published in 2015 and specifies **IPv6 over BLE**
- Bluetooth 5.0 was released in 2016 and is targeted to support **IoT** use cases
- The current data rate allows for up to 50 Mbps



You should now be able to answer the following questions:

- What are common transmission media and what are their most important properties?
- Which challenges arise particularly in wireless networks?
- How can existing infrastructure be used to bridge the last mile?
- Which common technologies are used on the physical layer?

