



Satellite Article for ConferZone Web Site

1. Who (what companies or industries) are using satellite technology for communications purposes?

Satellite technology is being used across the board encompassing companies and industries world wide. It usually is based on a point to multipoint application. Here are three applications that I found to be particularly interesting.

Australian Farmers Use Satellites To Manage Pastures

Australian farmers are trying out a satellite-based pasture monitoring system designed to improve their ability to make informed farm management decisions. Using the MODIS sensor onboard the Terra satellite, Australia's 'Pastures From Space' consortium is delivering detailed data relating to pasture growth rates (PGRs), according to CSIRO (Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organization) Livestock Industries, sponsor of the program. The MODIS sensor remotely estimates PGRs, which are then validated against on-ground measurements.

Subsequent management decisions about grazing rotations, feed budgeting, fertilizer application and other 'precision agriculture' techniques can be made with greater accuracy. The trial involves 60 farmers throughout Western Australia's Mediterranean climate zone. The satellites measure solar radiation reflected from the Earth's surface to create an image.

Marlink To Supply Satellite Communications To Cruise Ship

Marlink, an Oslo, Norway-based maritime satellite company, has signed a five-year agreement with Kyma Ship Management Co., a Miami, Fla.-based cruise ship company, to supply satellite communications for its MV Mona Lisa vessel. Financial terms were not disclosed. The agreement calls for Marlink, a subsidiary of Telenor Satellite Services, to provide Sealink high-speed Internet connections of up to 2 Mbps for MV Mona Lisa.

Norsat To Provide Terminals For Telemedicine Application

Norsat International [Toronto: NII], a Burnaby, British Columbia based-satellite equipment company, has received a contract to supply its Securelink satellite terminals to the University of California to deliver health care via satellite to remote parts of California. Financial terms were not disclosed. The portable Securelink terminals will enable medical personnel from the UC Davis Health and Technology Center to work with emergency personnel in the field, providing telemedicine services to people who do not have access to telecommunications infrastructure. The portable satellite terminal and Earth station will enable the transmission of images and data at speeds up to 6 Mbps.

2. How does the role of satellite differ for small businesses and large corporations?

In today's economy, you would probably find that the small business is more apt to use the internet to communicate on a point to multipoint basis while the large corporation is still using satellite. Once again it does depend on the application and the accessibility. You have to ask yourself how remote the site is that you are trying to reach?

3. What advances in digital technology make satellite technology more appealing?

What challenges still exist?

Quite simply - Digital Technology has allowed better use of channel capacity – thereby allowing more information to be transmitted while using less bandwidth.

4. How has the evolution of satellite design impacted the end user or potential user?

Smaller receive antennas thereby keeping the consumers cost down. A good example is the Dish network with its offering of 150 plus channels into an 18' to 2 foot antenna.

5. How have satellite regulations changed and what does this mean to the satellite customer?

Satellite technology has improved significantly since the launch of Westar 1 in the mid 70's to allow the 2 degree spacing of communication satellites thereby allowing the launch of more satellites without their interfering with each other.

The Writer

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