

SCIENTIFIC GENERICS

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MEG\LTR\1272S

Vic Hayes
Chairman IEEE P802.11

Dear Mr Hayes

Following a series of discussions which we have had about WLANs, Alan Flatman of ICL gave me a copy of the draft requirements document produced by 802.11 for my comments. Overall, I think that the document is a very good attempt at outlining the potential requirements of most applications. However, there are some areas which I disagree with as outlined below.

I believe that the range of hospital applications will be much wider than indicated in the document. If the interference problems can be resolved then the WLAN will be used generally for paging, instrumentation, ambulatory monitoring and other applications which reflect the high level of mobility within hospitals. Education applications are very price sensitive and I do not foresee significant market penetration in this sector. Both of these markets will vary considerably on a national basis with far greater market potential in the US than, for example, in the UK. I am also very wary of the use of WLANs for meetings since this only works if all participants both have, and remember to bring, their terminals.

My experience in mobile communication systems indicates that voice and data systems have different requirements in terms of switching and protocol requirements. I think that voice applications for WLANs should be constrained to voice mail to bypass any need for telephony which could unbalance the specification.

My greatest concern is that the range of requirements is very broad and no attempt has been made to prioritise them. In practice, a small number of the identified applications will dominate the usage of WLANs and some of the other applications will never arise because the cost-performance will be unacceptable. If the latter are allowed to unduly influence the specification then they may kill the prime applications and thereby remove any practical value from 802.11.

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The current document has been prepared by a reasonably thorough engineering exercise. It is essential that it is given a realistic market and product perspective to ensure that it meets the requirements of the largest number of users or maximises the market potential rather than provide the largest number of applications.

I would welcome your comments on the above and would be pleased to comment on future versions of the document if you think this is worthwhile.

Yours sincerely



A G Kellett

cc Alan Flatman, ICL Kidsgrove