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# User's Guide

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Welcome to *Datapro Reports on PC & LAN Communications*. In the Datapro tradition, this timely periodical covers the latest products and emerging technologies. The monthly issues provide technical detail that helps you evaluate a system, compare similar products, find out about new product developments, and understand an unfamiliar technology or keep up to date in a technology you already know.

Although you may be eager to explore *Datapro Reports on PC & LAN Communications*, take time first to learn more about how it can serve you and your associates. The monthly issues keep your knowledge current on all the changes that affect the dynamic microcomputer communications industry. This User's Guide points out *Datapro Reports on PC & LAN Communications*' design features, structure, and organization.

Your subscription consists of monthly issues that you may file for future reference in the special loose-leaf binders we provide. Each issue starts off with a Highlights page that draws your attention to the current contents and the important items covered in the issue. An integral and important part of each issue is *Communications Perspective*, a monthly newsletter that covers the latest industry and technology developments.

We encourage you and your associates to read each monthly issue when you receive it so that its timely information can help you in making decisions based on knowledge of the latest available technology.

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## Find It Fast

*Datapro Reports on PC & LAN Communications* is designed to help you locate information quickly. The reports in each monthly issue are arranged by subject and identified by a page numbering system that enables you to locate them easily. The binders provided with your subscription contain clearly labeled tabs behind which these reports can be filed. Once you read the monthly issue, we recommend filing all reports in the binders to help you locate important information in the future. The Table of Contents that appears in each issue includes section heads that correspond to the labeled tabs and identify specific subject areas.

The Index (Tab 100) supports the Table of Contents. It provides the means to broaden your search for more specific information. Vendor and product names, concepts, and technologies are cross-referenced to help you quickly find what you seek.

The following describes each section (tab):

### Volume 1 (Survey Reports)

- Contents/Index (100)
- User's Guide (200)
- Newsletter (400)
- Surveys (500)
- PC-to-Mainframe (510)
- Local Area Networks (520)
- Asynchronous Communications (530)
- Electronic Mail (535)
- Microcomputer Systems (550)

- Modems/Muxes/Support Equipment (570)
- Security (580)

### Volume 2 (Product Reports)

- Product Evaluations/Methodologies (605)
- Products • A-to-B (610)
- Products • C (620)
- Products • D-to-E (630)
- Products • F-to-H (640)
- Products • I (650)
- Products • J-to-M (660)
- Products • N-to-P (670)
- Products • Q-to-S (680)
- Products • T-to-Z (690)

### Volume 3 (Technology Reports/NSTL Evaluations)

- Technology Reports (700)
- LAN Hardware Evaluations (800)
- LAN Operating System Evaluations (810)
- LAN Internetworking Evaluations (820)
- LAN Software Evaluations (830)
- LAN Management Product Evaluations (840)
- Vendor Directory (900)

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## The Page Numbering System

*Datapro Reports on PC & LAN Communications'* page numbers consist of two or three parts. This numbering method provides the flexibility to organize the publication by sections and insert new and revised pages each month. The components of a page number (e. g., 650-I048-101) relate to the section/tab, vendor/report identification, and starting page number, respectively. (Note that *only* product report page numbers consist of three parts; all other report types consist of two parts—section/tab and page number.)

**650**—section/tab number

**I048**—vendor/report number (product reports only)

**101**—beginning page number

In this case, **650** represents the **Products • I** tab. The second part of the number, **-I048**, separated

from the first part by a hyphen, represents an identification number for a specific vendor found within a tab section.

The third part of the number, **-101**, also separated by a hyphen, denotes the starting page number of the report. The starting page number will then increase sequentially through the body of the report (for example, -101, -102, -103, and so on).

This page numbering system allows alphabetical arrangement (by vendor name) of reports within a section/tab. For example, a report for a specific model or product line will be grouped with related reports from the same vendor. The first of these reports will carry the page number **-101**; other reports covering the same vendor will start with page numbers **-201**, **-301**, **-401**, etc.

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## Datapro Report Types

*Datapro Reports on PC & LAN Communications* includes a variety of report types, each designed to help you quickly find the information you seek.

### Surveys

A survey is a comprehensive summary of a particular technology, the market and associated vendors, and the products available using that technology. These reports frequently provide background information and offer tips on selection and planning. The key characteristic of a survey report is its comprehensiveness.

Components of survey reports include:

- A *Market Overview*, describing the market, market size, major vendors, and any pertinent survey results.
- A *Technology Overview*, explaining the basic technology, its importance, and future developments.
- The *Comparison Columns*, a quick reference source of company addresses and telephone numbers plus current product specifications and competitive features presented in a tabular format.

### Product Reports

A product report is a detailed examination of a vendor's product or product family. Product reports offer expert evaluations of products, providing both technical and nontechnical data needed to

**Name of Publication**  
**Report Number**  
**Section Name**

**Product Summary**

Speeds your review of  
the report

**Content Listings**

Show you how to find  
topics quickly

**Standardized Heads**

Help you locate topics  
quickly

**datapro** Datapro Reports on Communications Alternatives CA40-738-101  
Fiber Optic Communications

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## Proteon ProNET Fiber Optic Networks

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**In this report:**

Analysis .....	-102
Characteristics .....	-106
Pricing .....	-109

**Product Summary**

**Editor's Note**  
Many of Proteon's product developments have emerged from the company's continuing involvement in the emerging Fiber Distributed Digital Interface (FDDI) standard. In January 1990, Proteon announced the p4200 multiprotocol FDDI router. This report details the ProNET product line and examines the company's competitive position.

**Description**  
Proteon's ProNET baseband local area networks (LANs) operate at 4M, 10M, or 80M bps and link up to 260 stations per ring over various media, including fiber, using the token-passing media access scheme.

**Strengths**  
Proteon is a leader in providing high-speed LANs. It was an early implementer of the token-passing technique now used by IBM. ProNET's topology supports a variety of fault tolerance schemes. Proteon has announced a free upgrade plan for ProNET-80 users who want FDDI capabilities.

**Limitations**  
To take full advantage of ProNET-80's high bandwidth and variety of interfaces, users must be prepared to develop their own applications and

customized network operating systems. The company once offered installation and programming support for its boards through its Special Systems Development group, but it has discontinued this service. Prices are somewhat higher than those of other third-party vendors.

**Competition**  
Ungermann-Bass Net/One Optical Fiber Network, Codenoll Technology's CodeNet fiber optic Ethernet network, Versitron System Finex, IN-NET Fiber-Talk, other fiber-based Ethernet networks and FDDI networks and routers.

**Vendor**  
Proteon, Inc.  
Two Technology Drive  
Westborough, MA 01581-5008  
(617) 898-2800  
In Canada:  
Proteon ProNET products are sold in Canada through independent distributors and value-added resellers (VARs).

**Price**  
A four-node p6000 ProNET-4 Network Management Kit (see Equipment Prices) costs \$5,000.

**GSA Schedule**  
Yes.

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make informed purchase decisions. A product report consists of a one-page product summary, followed by an expert analysis of the product, the vendor, and its position in the marketplace; detailed product characteristics; and pricing.

### **User Ratings**

Datapro's extensive user surveys are compiled into user ratings that tell you what others think of the products they are using. Editors gather survey responses from users of key products and services; these are validated and then tabulated by an independent computer service company. Summary information is prepared in tabular form providing totals, percentages, or mean averages as appropriate for each survey question.

Datapro strongly suggests that readers use the information presented in user ratings with discretion. The ratings are not intended as statistically accurate indicators of represented products' capabilities. Rather, they should be used as guides to potential strengths and weaknesses of those products. Any product decision should be made only after further investigation.

### **Technology Reports**

Technology reports contain how-to information and are tutorials designed to assist you in evaluating practical technologies and in staying informed regarding issues, trends, and new technologies. They cover broad technology concepts, standards, regulatory issues, and other topics. Written in a

management style, they can be used as instructional, planning, and current awareness guides by technology practitioners and their staffs.

### **NSTL Evaluations**

National Software Testing Laboratories, Inc. (NSTL) creates and runs tests that evaluate personal computer and local area network hardware and software. Founded in 1983, NSTL pioneered the use of objective and comparative methodologies to become the leading independent testing and evaluation facility in the microcomputer industry. A member of the Datapro Research Group since 1989, NSTL provides reports generated from its new LAN laboratory to meet the information needs of *Datapro Reports on PC & LAN Communications* subscribers. These reports provide comparative evaluations of LAN hardware and software and are designed to make the subscriber's product selection process easier.

### **Vendor Directories**

Directories are a compendium of information on communications vendors and consultants. Directories frequently provide brief descriptions about the subject areas.

### **Newsletter**

Each monthly issue of your subscription contains a newsletter covering the latest trends, announcements, and industry developments. ■