

Power supply and telecomms plugs on public transport 3 Ian Pearson, Futurologist, March 1992

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It is obvious today and we have these sockets on many trains and planes, but it is only the last several years we have had them. In 1992 this was still way in the future, but already an obvious demand.

Concept

Power supply and telecomms plugs on public transport

Problems

Mobile computing and mobile telephony are limited by power supplies

BT Opportunity

Increased use of mobile and fixed networks

Higher bandwidth capability for mobile services

Summary

Currently, batteries allow portable PCs to be used for a few hours at best. They make portable computers very heavy. Mobile bandwidth deficiency makes communications sluggish. It would be useful if power supplies suitable for appliances such as computers and mobile phones were provided on public transport such as trains and buses and at public locations such as stations and shopping centres. Communications sockets could also be provided (perhaps the two could be combined). If plugs were provided in public areas, this could potentially remove the bandwidth bottleneck which currently limits mobile services, enabling high speed data transfers and other such services, and moving services onto the fixed network which would otherwise clog the mobile networks. Obviously, plugs on transport would still have some bandwidth limits unless the data could be transported from the vehicle without using the mobile network (perhaps direct connection would be feasible to the fixed network for trains, trams and even perhaps buses and cars in the future).

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3/3/92