



*By Toni Eid, Editor in Chief, Telecom Review*

As a Canadian editing the world's largest telecommunication media publication, I enjoyed reading about the lawsuit between TELUS Communications and Shaw over the use of "Fibre+" by Shaw in their marketing offer. I asked my technical team to help formulate an opinion.

Just like Crest Whitening was trademarked by Procter and Gamble as a good marketing move, it seems Shaw is intent on branding and owning fibre with its “fibre+” services offer. Again, kudos to the Shaw team for good marketing. While “Crest Whitening” is empathetic with client benefits, it does seem that operators are pushing technologies as client benefits. I doubt their intent is being un-empathetic or is it perhaps that the technology teams and CTOs are the ones that come up with marketing slogans. The wireless world is a great example with 5G. As a mobile user, I’m not sure what every G brought to me – it’s true that in some cases additional speeds were offered but things took a while for devices and services to catch up. A good example is that there is no 5G iPhone yet.

Back to the main reason for this article, Bell talks about Pure Fibre, TELUS branded PureFibre, Rogers has a fibre to the home service (FTTH), and now Shaw launched their Fibre+ service. Seems boring but the only one where I as a consumer know what I am getting is Rogers. I take it the word fibre has all the cache needed to convince consumers that the service is super fast. As a consumer with kids who study at home and myself and my wife all using zoom, does this cover me? Do I have sufficient bandwidth? Can I have a few video meets at the same time? I guess based on the Canadian landscape, fibre is the answer.

In addition, the FTTH council is using the multi-fiber services FTTX , as it includes homes, enterprises, cabins, etc. So, what Fiber+ has more to offer?

By no means is my editorial meant to be a technical one, but cable labs and the cable world for

the longest time enjoyed superior download speeds with DOCSIS technology (Data Over Cable Service Interface Specification). Telcos' answer has been fibre to the home. At the 1st Broadband World Forum (BBWF) in the UK, the formal fibre to the home technologies were announced 20 years ago. Verizon in the US was one of the first in the world to offer that and the triple bundle of internet, telephony and television. The progress and growing ecosystem has made fiber to the home the new arena for investment for all operators not just cableco. PCCW in Hong Kong was one of the first in the world to offer a 10 Gps (Giga bit per second) service to the home. DOCSIS with DOCSIS 3.1 can maintain similar downstreams, but lack the near symmetry of xPON (the FTTH technology used predominantly by telcos). The heavily shared nature of how the cableco plants were built, was for TV broadcast signals - one too many rather than interactive - and most cableco are upgrading their DOCSIS plants and reducing the shared nature of their nodes from approximately 500 to 200 and lower. To fully compete with telcos they will have to get to the same level of aggregation knowing that telcos vary from 24 users per node to 64 users per node.

What does it mean to be fibre+. It must be FTTH and more. I have asked my technical team to go dig into it, but the outcome does not seem to be technically accurate. In the same vein, I am not sure what un-pure fibre is, but I can accept PureFibre as a true fibre service. In the UK they have started to use the word True Fibre to indicate FTTH - a good move possibly.

I was very impressed with the Canadian operators and how they have come together to support Canadians. I enjoyed reading Alexandra Posadzki's article on April 19th, 2020 in the globe and mail titled “*Telecoms respond to surge in demand with extraordinary measures amid pandemic*” and Ibrahim Gedeon's opinion editorial “*how do we recover?*” on June 9th in the National Post.

This pandemic has highlighted the importance of connectivity in a physically distanced world. Canada is a great shining example of how operators are stepping up to serve Canadians. I know in the lawsuit between TELUS and Shaw, the British Columbia government and judges will do the right thing for their citizens and Canadians as a whole.

Please do not take advantage of our vulnerability and dependency on the internet with marketing bravado, say it like it is.