

Description

The present invention relates to a passive optical network and in particular to the design of an optical receiver for a head-end station used in such a network.

Such a device is known from WO-A-89/05070.

The present applicants have developed a bit transport system (BTS) for use in a TPON (telephony on a passive optical network) network. In this network downstream data is broadcast in a TDMA multiplexed frame from a head-end station to a number of terminations connected to the head-end station via a passive optical fibre network. In the return or upstream direction, each termination transmits data in a predetermined time slot so that at the head-end station the data from the different terminations are interleaved to form an upstream TDMA frame of predetermined format. The optical receiver in the head-end station therefore has to cope with interleaved pulses arriving from a number of terminations. The precise number of these pulses will be indeterminate at any given instant, varying with the amount of traffic in the upstream direction. It follows that the head-end station in normal operation has to handle a wide range of mean power levels. In addition, certain fault conditions can result in a laser in one of the terminations transmitting continuously, causing an arbitrary shift in the mean levels received at the head-end station. It is important that the receiver should be capable of continuing to function without such faults significantly disrupting traffic.

According to the present invention, there is provided a network head-end station arranged to receive an upstream TDMA frame comprising interleaved optical signals from a plurality of terminations connected to the head-end station by a fibre network, the station including an opto-electronic receiver and a DC clamping circuit for the opto-electronic receiver, characterised in that: the terminations are arranged such that none of the terminations transmit in a quiet phase of the upstream TDMA frame; the DC clamping circuit is arranged, when operated, to clamp signals received during the remainder of the TDMA frame to a DC reference level received during the quiet phase; and the station further including a clamping pulse generator arranged to generate a pulse at a predetermined time falling within the quiet phase to operate the DC clamping circuit.

By providing a DC clamping circuit in the head-end opto-electronic receiver and timing the operation of that clamping circuit to fall within a predetermined quiet phase in the upstream TDMA frame, the present invention avoids the need for tracking the widely varying DC levels at the head-end receiver and so considerably simplifies the design of that receiver. The timing of the transmissions from the terminations is arranged so that no correctly functioning termination

transmits signals timed to arrive during the quiet phase. If however a faulty termination includes a laser which is continuously ON then power from that termination will be received during the quiet phase and is effectively cancelled by the DC clamping process. A failure of this sort can therefore disrupt the upstream traffic for no longer than the period from the first occurrence of the fault to the next clamping pulse.

Preferably the head-end station is arranged to receive TDMA frames including phase-1 ranging pulses, phase-2 ranging pulses and immediately following the phase-2 ranging pulses a plurality of data frames and the clamping pulse generator is arranged to generate a pulse timed to fall in a quiet phase between the phase-1 ranging pulses and the phase-2 ranging pulses.

In order to synchronise the operation of the terminations it is necessary to compensate for the different path lengths between the head-end station and different terminations. The calculation of the delay to the nearest clock cycle and the setting of a complementary delay in the timing of the transmissions from the termination concerned is termed phase-1 ranging and in the preferred aspect of the present invention the upstream TDMA frame includes a portion dedicated to phase-1 ranging pulses. In general the phase-1 ranging delay only needs to be set when a termination is first coupled to the network. In the normal operation of the network however there are continual small variations in the phase of the signals arriving at the head-end station arising from, for example, local temperature fluctuations in the optical fibres. In order to measure and compensate for these small phase variations the TDMA frame includes a section for receiving what are termed phase-2 ranging pulses, used to monitor and control these variations in phase. It is necessary to separate the phase-1 and phase-2 ranging pulses and so it is found that the quiet phase for the DC clamping pulse may advantageously be positioned between the phase-1 and phase-2 ranging sections of the upstream TDMA frame.

A head-end station in accordance with the present invention will now be described in detail with reference to the accompanying drawings in which:

Figure 1 is a diagram showing a TPON network; Figure 2 is a diagram showing the upstream TDMA frame structure; and

Figure 3 is a block diagram of an optical receiver suitable for use in the head-end station of figure 1.

A TPON network comprises a head-end station 1, and a number of terminations 2 linked to the head-end station 1 by a passive optical fibre network 3. For clarity, only three terminations are shown in figure 1 although in practice many more terminations are connected to each head-end station, and similarly the fibre network 3 includes many more branches.

In the downstream direction, TDMA (time division

multiple access) frames are broadcast from the head-end station 1 to all the terminations 2 on the fibre network 3. In the upstream direction, each termination 2 transmits an optical signal in a predetermined time slot. At the head-end station 1 the optical signals from the different terminations 2 interleave to form the upstream TDMA frame in a predetermined format.

The network operates synchronously, the terminations 2 deriving a clock from the received broadcast downstream frames. The timing of the transmission of upstream data is advanced or retarded by each termination in response to control signals received from the head-end station 1. In order to assess the timing and phase of the transmissions from each termination the upstream TDMA frame includes a phase-1 ranging section and a phase-2 ranging section. Each termination 2 transmits a ranging pulse in each of these sections, and the phase and timing of each pulse is determined by the head-end station.

The structure of the upstream TDMA frame is shown in figure 2. The phase-1 and phase-2 ranging pulses precede frames carrying traffic and house-keeping data. A quiet phase is provided between the phase-1 and phase-2 ranging pulses and this quiet phase is used in setting the DC reference level for an opto-electronic receiver 4 in the head-end station 1, as described in further detail below.

The opto-electronic receiver 4 for the head-end station 1 includes a conventional photo-electric detector 6 which converts the incoming optical signals into an electric signal which is applied to a DC bias and buffer circuit 7. The output from the bias circuit is applied to an AC gain block 8. The gain block 8 is AC-coupled to a high impedance buffer 9 which provides the data output from the receiver. A DC clamping circuit 10 is provided at the input to the high impedance buffer 9. The clamping circuit 10 is activated by a pulse from a timing generator driven by the head-end station master clock. The clamping pulse is timed to occur during the quiet phase of the upstream TDMA frame during the 15 microseconds immediately preceding the phase-2 ranging pulses. During that quiet phase all correctly functioning terminations are guaranteed to be quiet. The background level during this quiet period then acts as the DC reference point for the duration of the remainder of the 10mS frame.

If a faulty termination is transmitting continuously then the background level during the quiet phase is raised accordingly and the DC reference level adjusted to cancel the effects of the transmission from the faulty termination.

Claims

1. A network head-end station arranged to receive an upstream TDMA frame comprising interleaved optical signals from a plurality of termina-

tions connected to the head-end station by a fibre network, the station including an opto-electronic receiver and a DC clamping circuit for the opto-electronic receiver, characterised in that : the terminations are arranged such that none of the terminations transmit in a quiet phase of the upstream TDMA frame; the DC clamping circuit is arranged, when operated, to clamp signals received during the remainder of the TDMA frame to a DC reference level received during the quiet phase; and the station further including a clamping pulse generator arranged to generate a pulse at a predetermined time falling within the quiet phase to operate the DC clamping circuit.

2. A head-end station according to claim 1, in which the head-end station is arranged to receive TDMA frames including phase-1 ranging pulses, phase-2 ranging pulses and immediately following the phase-2 ranging pulses a plurality of data frames and the clamping pulse generator is arranged to generate a pulse timed to fall in a quiet phase between the phase-1 ranging pulses and the phase-2 ranging pulses.
3. A head-end station according to claim 1 or 2, in which the head-end station includes a master clock for the network and the timing of the clamping pulse generator is locked to the master clock.
4. A head-end station according to any one of the preceding claims, in which the opto-electronic receiver includes a photo-electric detector arranged to convert the received optical signals into corresponding electrical signals, AC amplifier means arranged to amplify the said corresponding electrical signals and a high impedance output buffer connected to an output of the AC amplifier means, and in which the DC clamping circuit is connected between the said output and a fixed reference voltage source.

Patentansprüche

1. Kopfstation eines Netzwerks, die zum Empfang von aufwärts laufenden TDMA-Rahmen ausgelegt ist, die miteinander verschränkte optische Signale von mehreren Abschlußterminals, die über ein Fasernetzwerk mit der Kopfstation verbunden sind, aufweist, wobei die Station einen optoelektronischen Empfänger und eine Gleichspannungsbestimmungsschaltung für den optoelektronischen Empfänger aufweist, dadurch gekennzeichnet, daß: die Abschlußterminals so ausgelegt sind, daß in einer Ruhephase des aufwärts laufenden TDMA-Rahmens kein Abschlußterminal sendet; die



multiple access) frames are broadcast from the head-end station 1 to all the terminations 2 on the fibre network 3. In the upstream direction, each termination 2 transmits an optical signal in a predetermined time slot. At the head-end station 1 the optical signals from the different terminations 2 interleave to form the upstream TDMA frame in a predetermined format.

The network operates synchronously, the terminations 2 deriving a clock from the received broadcast downstream frames. The timing of the transmission of upstream data is advanced or retarded by each termination in response to control signals received from the head-end station 1. In order to assess the timing and phase of the transmissions from each termination the upstream TDMA frame includes a phase-1 ranging section and a phase-2 ranging section. Each termination 2 transmits a ranging pulse in each of these sections, and the phase and timing of each pulse is determined by the head-end station.

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The opto-electronic receiver 4 for the head-end station 1 includes a conventional photo-electric detector 6 which converts the incoming optical signals into an electric signal which is applied to a DC bias and buffer circuit 7. The output from the bias circuit is applied to an AC gain block 8. The gain block 8 is AC-coupled to a high impedance buffer 9 which provides the data output from the receiver. A DC clamping circuit 10 is provided at the input to the high impedance buffer 9. The clamping circuit 10 is activated by a pulse from a timing generator driven by the head-end station master clock. The clamping pulse is timed to occur during the quiet phase of the upstream TDMA frame during the 15 microseconds immediately preceding the phase-2 ranging pulses. During that quiet phase all correctly functioning terminations are guaranteed to be quiet. The background level during this quiet period then acts as the DC reference point for the duration of the remainder of the 10mS frame.

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2. A head-end station according to claim 1, in which the head-end station is arranged to receive TDMA frames including phase-1 ranging pulses, phase-2 ranging pulses and immediately following the phase-2 ranging pulses a plurality of data frames and the clamping pulse generator is arranged to generate a pulse timed to fall in a quiet phase between the phase-1 ranging pulses and the phase-2 ranging pulses.
3. A head-end station according to claim 1 or 2, in which the head-end station includes a master clock for the network and the timing of the clamping pulse generator is locked to the master clock.
4. A head-end station according to any one of the preceding claims, in which the opto-electronic receiver includes a photo-electric detector arranged to convert the received optical signals into corresponding electrical signals, AC amplifier means arranged to amplify the said corresponding electrical signals and a high impedance output buffer connected to an output of the AC amplifier means, and in which the DC clamping circuit is connected between the said output and a fixed reference voltage source.

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1. Kopfstation eines Netzwerks, die zum Empfang von aufwärts laufenden TDMA-Rahmen ausgelegt ist, die miteinander verschränkte optische Signale von mehreren Abschlußterminals, die über ein Fasernetzwerk mit der Kopfstation verbunden sind, aufweist, wobei die Station einen optoelektronischen Empfänger und eine Gleichspannungsbestimmungsschaltung für den optoelektronischen Empfänger aufweist, dadurch gekennzeichnet, daß: die Abschlußterminals so ausgelegt sind, daß in einer Ruhephase des aufwärts laufenden TDMA-Rahmens kein Abschlußterminal sendet; die



- Gleichspannungsbestimmungsschaltung dazu ausgelegt ist, wenn sie betätigt wird, die während des übrigen TDMA-Rahmens empfangenen Signale anhand eines Gleichspannungsreferenzpegels zu bestimmen, der während der Ruhephase empfangen wurde; und wobei die Station außerdem einen Bestimmungsimpulsgenerator aufweist, der dazu ausgelegt ist, zu einer vorbestimmten Zeit, die in die Ruhephase fällt, zur Betätigung der Gleichspannungsbestimmungsschaltung einen Impuls zu erzeugen.
2. Kopfstation nach Anspruch 1, bei der die Kopfstation zum Empfang von TDMA-Rahmen ausgelegt ist, die Steuerungsimpulse der Phase 1 aufweisen, Steuerungsimpulse der Phase 2 und unmittelbar nach den Steuerungsimpulsen der Phase 2 mehrere Datenrahmen, und wobei der Bestimmungsimpulsgenerator dazu ausgelegt ist, einen Impuls derart zu erzeugen, daß er in eine Ruhephase zwischen den Steuerungsimpulsen der Phase 1 und den Steuerungsimpulsen der Phase 2 fällt.
3. Kopfstation nach Anspruch 1 oder 2, bei der die Kopfstation einen Master-Takt für das Netzwerk aufweist und wobei die Zeitsteuerung des Bestimmungsimpulsgenerators an den Master-Takt gekoppelt ist.
4. Kopfstation nach einem der vorhergehenden Ansprüche, bei der der optoelektronische Empfänger einen photoelektrischen Detektor aufweist, der dazu ausgelegt ist, die empfangenen optischen Signale in entsprechende elektrische Signale umzuwandeln, eine Wechselstromverstärkereinrichtung, die dazu ausgelegt ist, die entsprechenden elektrischen Signale zu verstärken, und einen Ausgabepuffer hoher Impedanz, der mit einem Ausgang der Wechselstromverstärkereinrichtung verbunden ist, und wobei die Gleichspannungsbestimmungsschaltung zwischen diesen Ausgang und eine feste Referenzspannungsquelle geschaltet ist.
- phase passive de la trame AMRT amont; le circuit de verrouillage à courant continu est agencé pour bloquer, en service, les signaux reçus pendant le reste de la trame AMRT à un niveau de référence à courant continu reçu pendant la phase passive; et que la station comprend en outre un générateur d'impulsions de verrouillage agencé pour émettre une impulsion à un moment prédéterminé entrant dans la phase passive pour actionner le circuit de verrouillage à courant continu.
2. Une station de tête selon la revendication 1, dans laquelle la station de tête est agencée pour recevoir des trames AMRT comprenant des impulsions d'arrangement de phase 1, des impulsions d'arrangement de phase 2 et, immédiatement après les impulsions d'arrangement de phase 2, une pluralité de trames de données, et le générateur d'impulsions de verrouillage est agencé pour émettre une impulsion synchronisée de manière à se produire dans une phase passive, entre les impulsions d'arrangement de phase 1 et les impulsions d'arrangement de phase 2.
3. Une station de tête selon la revendication 1 ou 2, dans laquelle la station de tête comprend une horloge mère du réseau et la synchronisation du générateur d'impulsions de verrouillage est bloquée sur l'horloge mère.
4. Une station de tête selon l'une quelconque des précédentes revendications, dans laquelle le récepteur optoélectronique comprend un détecteur photoélectrique agencé pour convertir les signaux optiques reçus en signaux électriques correspondants, des moyens d'amplification à courant alternatif agencés pour amplifier lesdits signaux électriques correspondants et un tampon de sortie à haute impédance relié à une sortie des moyens d'amplification à courant alternatif, et dans lequel le circuit de verrouillage à courant continu est connecté entre ladite sortie et une source de tension de référence fixe.

Revendications

1. Une station de tête de réseau agencée pour recevoir une trame AMRT amont comprenant des signaux optiques entrelacés provenant d'une pluralité de terminaisons reliées à la station de tête par un réseau à fibres optiques, la station comprenant un récepteur optoélectronique et un circuit de verrouillage à courant continu du récepteur optoélectronique, caractérisée en ce que: les terminaisons sont agencées de manière qu'aucune des terminaisons ne transmette dans une