

METHOD AND DEVICE OF PORT TEST OF BROAD BAND ACCESS DEVICE IN THE DIGITAL SUBSCRIBER BROAD BAND ACCESS SYSTEM

Field of the Technology

5 The present invention relates generally to techniques of testing digital subscriber line (DSL) broadband service in a broadband digital subscriber access system, particularly to a method for testing port of a broadband access device in a broadband digital subscriber access system and the apparatus thereof.

Background of the Invention

10 In the field of telecommunications, an operator is able to provide a subscriber with both broadband and narrow-band telecommunication services via a twisted pair simultaneously, e.g. ADSL (Asymmetric Digital Subscriber Line) over POTS (Plain Ordinary Telephone Service), ADSL over ISDN (Integrated Service Digital Network),
15 VDSL (Very High Digital Subscriber Line) over POTS, VDSL over ISDN, and G.SHDSL (Single-pair High-speed Digital Subscriber Line). Such applications have become quite common in the field. In this invention, ADSL, VDSL, and G.SHDSL are referred to as xDSL.

20 As shown in Figure 1, xDSL signals and POTS/ISDN signals co-exist in one external subscriber line. At the side of Central Office (CO), a Splitter (SPL) in a broadband access device, such as a DSL Access Multiplexer (DSLAM), separates broadband service and narrow-band service transferred from a main distribution frame (MDF) and distributes them to broadband (xDSL) service board and narrow-band (POTS/ISDN) service board for processing, respectively. At the side of Customer Premises Equipment (CPE), on the other hand, SPL in CPE separates the broadband
25 and narrow-band services from the MDF and transfers them to a xDSL Modem and a phone set, respectively.

 When performing an xDSL service, the xDSL service board at CO side and the xDSL Modem at the CPE side will firstly initiate a hand-shake process and establish a connection before transferring digital data.

When there is a failure in the broadband access device, how to locate the failure quickly, effectively, and accurately, especially how to decide quickly and accurately whether the xDSL service board works normally, has become an issue with a significant impact on the cost of operation and maintenance as well as on the quality of service of the operator.

As shown in Figure 2, a modem is at present often used to find out failures in a port of a broadband access device. The modem is coupled with a port of a broadband access device, and then the operation parameters thereof are observed and utilized to determine whether the port in the broadband access device is normal. After that, perform internet access via the modem or send a ping packet to decide whether the xDSL board in the broadband access device is normal. However, this technique has the following drawbacks:

1. The cost is high and the testing steps are complicated. Modems and computers are needed to locate the failure of the broadband access device, and output of the port of the tested broadband access device has to be led to a testing computer via a modem at MDF of CO side. If there is no testing computer, personnel are required to cooperate at the modem to read out the data; or even there is no way of making measurement to determine whether the bit error rate of the data path is normal. Meanwhile the functional test equipment used in manufacture line is unwieldy as many modems and computers have to be involved.

2. As the test is performed at the near end and that means no loop is inserted between CO and xDSL modem, test result may not be accurate. In particular, the test result can not show the performance in loop, nor can it give an actual disclosure of the degrade of analog circuit of the port in broadband access devices.

3. The test result may depend on the interoperability between broadband access devices and modems which are provided by various vendors as well as the performance of the modems themselves. In terms of the functional testing equipment in the manufacture line, as the modems have to be activated and deactivated frequently, the usability of the testing equipment is subject to the stability of the modems.

4. When the broadband access device operates in a network, personnel are needed in the premise of the DSLAM to troubleshoot it.

There is another test method at present, as shown in Figure 3, where a portable testing instrument is used. For instance, a portable xDSL testing instrument can be used for the above-mentioned test of a broadband access device at the MDF; or a special testing instrument for analog signals, such as a spectrum analyzer, may be used for testing the port of a broadband access device. However, since a modem chip is built in such a portable testing instrument, this test method has all the drawbacks of the previous solution, and spectrum analyzer is too expensive to be used in functional test in mass production.

Summary of the Invention

In view of the above, the primary object of this invention is to provide a method for port test of a broadband access device in a digital subscriber broadband access system. According to this invention, internal test of a port of a broadband access device can be accomplished without an external testing equipment or increasing of maintenance personnel.

Another object of the present invention is to provide an apparatus for port test of a broadband access device in a digital subscriber access system, which is able to accomplish internal measurement of a port of a broadband access device without external testing equipment or increasing of maintenance personnel.

To achieve the above objects, the technical solution in accordance with this invention is implemented as follows:

A method for self-testing a port of a broadband access device in a digital subscriber line (DSL) broadband access system, comprises,

A. transmitting a signal over a downstream channel of the port of the broadband access device in Central Office (CO) equipment, making the signal reflected at output end of the port;

B. an upstream channel of the port receiving and processing the reflected signal to obtain a test result of the port.

Wherein the said step of making the signal reflected at the output end of the port comprises, making the output impedance of the port of the broadband access device mismatch.

5 Wherein the said step of making the output impedance of the port of the broadband access device mismatch comprises:

making the output of the port of the broadband access device disconnected;
or making the output of the port of the broadband access device short-circuited;
or connecting the output of the port of the broadband access device to a load having a predefined resistance.

10 The test method further comprises:

measuring a reflected signal of the port of the broadband access device under a normal output impedance; and,

before the said processing in step B, further comprises, subtracting the reflected signal under the normal output impedance from the reflected signal received in step B
15 to obtain an accurate reflected signal for processing.

Wherein the said measuring a reflected signal of the port of the broadband access device under a normal output impedance comprises, connecting the output end of the port of the broadband access device with a calibrating device.

20 Wherein the said calibrating device is configured with at least a calibrating relay and a calibrating impedance and the calibrating relay connects the calibrating impedance to the output end of the port of the broadband access device.

Wherein the said signal transmitted in step A comprises full band of both upstream and downstream,

25 or is such one modulated by the port of the broadband access device with a pseudo random binary sequence (PRBS),

or is such one which comprises all frequency bands of upstream and downstream signals from the port of the broadband access device, and is modulated by the port of the broadband access device with a PRBS.

30 Wherein the said PRBS is generated by a digital signal processor (DSP) in the port of the broadband access device;

or generated by a network management system and scrambled by the DSP in the port of the broadband access device.

Wherein the said processing the reflected signals to obtain the test result of the port in step B comprises:

5 B1. the upstream channel of the port of the broadband access device amplifying the reflected signal and converting the analog signal to digital to obtain a digitized version of the reflected signal;

B2. making Discrete Fourier Transform for the digitized version of the reflected signal and obtaining the characteristic parameters of the reflected signals by
10 demodulation;

B3. comparing the characteristic parameters with the parameters of the transmitted signal to obtain characters of the port of the broadband access device such as SNR, and determining in accordance with the characteristic parameters whether components in the port of the broadband access device are normal.

15 An apparatus which supports port self-test of a DSL broadband access system, comprises at least a backbone bus, an aggregator, an in-board bus and at least one xDSL port, where

the aggregator is connected between the backbone bus and the in-board bus for use in aggregating xDSL data of multiple paths to the backbone bus and distributing
20 data from the backbone bus to appropriate DSLAM ports, and

the xDSL port is composed at least of a DSP, an analog front end (AFE), a Line Driver, a Line Receiver(may be integrated to AFE), a hybrid, and a testing relay(optional) with the Line Driver and the Line Receiver in separate serial connections between the AFE and the hybrid, respectively, and the DSP in serial
25 connection between the AFE and the in-board bus; the output port are used in receiving a control signal of the aggregator from the in-board bus, converting the control signal into an analog signal to a subscriber side;

wherein an output impedance of the said DSLAM port is mismatch.

The test apparatus further comprises a calibrating device, which consists at least
30 of a calibrating relay and a calibrating impedance, and the calibrating relay connects the calibrating impedance to the tested port via a set of contacts of the calibrating relay.

To sum up, the method provided by this invention makes the output impedance of a port of a broadband access device mismatch while the port receives the reflected version of signal transmit by said port, amplifies said reflected signals, and obtains the characteristics thereof by analysis so as to acquire the test result of the port of the broadband access device. Accordingly, in accordance with this invention, internal measurement of a port of a broadband access device can be accomplished without an external testing equipment or assigning maintenance personnel to site. Furthermore, in accordance with this invention, calibration of the signals reflected by a port of a broadband access device can be conducted such that test results can be obtained based on the calibrated reflected signals, thereby improving the accuracy of the internal measurement in accordance with this invention of the port of the broadband access device.

Brief Description of the Drawings

Figure 1 shows a digital subscriber broadband access system constituted by CO and CPE.

Figure 2 shows an prior system architecture for testing a CO port.

Figure 3 shows another prior system architecture for testing a CO port.

Figure 4 is the principle diagram of DSLAM.

Figure 5 shows the signal transfer in a path of a DSLAM port when making a test in accordance with the embodiment of this invention.

Figure 6 shows the connecting relation and signal transfer of a DSLAM port when making calibration in accordance with the embodiment of this invention.

Embodiments of the Invention

The present invention is hereinafter described in detail with reference to the accompanying drawings.

With mismatching impedance at output of a hybrid, an output signal of the hybrid will be reflected at the impedance discontinuous point, for example, a reflected version of the output signal will be produced at the output of a hybrid. Since a digital subscriber broadband access system is a hybrid system, when the output impedance of a port of a broadband access device is made mismatch, in accordance with this invention, the port can receive a reflected version of the self-output signal, make amplification of the reflected signal and obtain the characteristics thereof by

analysis so as to acquire the test result of the port of the broadband access device through a self-test mode.

As a broadband access device consists of DSLAM and Splitter (SPL), and SPL is a low-pass element, impact of SPL on the test of a port of a broadband access device is negligible when making such a test. That is, testing a port of a broadband access device actually means testing a DSLAM port. Therefore, this invention is described below by taking the test of a DSLAM port as an example.

Figure 4 is the functional diagram of DSLAM. As shown in Figure 4, DSLAM consists of the aggregator, the backbone bus i.e. BUS1, the in-board bus, i.e. BUS2, and at least one DSLAM port. The digital subscriber broadband access system manages the DSLAM via BUS1 while the aggregator is set between BUS1 and BUS2 for use in aggregating xDSL data of multiple paths to BUS1 as well as distributing the data flow from BUS1 to appropriate DSLAM ports. As shown in Figure 5, one DSLAM port consists at least of a digital signal processor (DSP), an analog front end (AFE), a Line Driver, a Line Receiver or a receiver built-in the AFE, a hybrid and a relay tester (RT), where the RT for use in connecting to a modem that is connected with the hybrid, Line Driver and Line Receiver are serially connected between AFE and the hybrid, respectively, and DSP is serially connected between AFE and BUS2. The DSLAM port is used to receive the control signal of the aggregator from BUS2, convert the control signal into an analog output signal, and give it through the hybrid to CPE.

In order to make the impedance of the DSLAM port mismatch, the DSLAM port is disconnected from the loop, or short-circuited, or connected with a load.

The following is a description of how to test a DSLAM port when the impedance of the port is mismatch.

Since a DSLAM is under the control of the network management of the digital subscriber broadband access system, after the network management issues a test command for this DSLAM port, the port will enter test mode, execute the test program, and transmit downstream signals to the external subscriber line. The downstream signal is such one of which comprises both upstream and downstream frequency band, for instance, all the tones are transmitted, tones 6~31 in upstream and

32~255 in downstream, for a DSLAM adopting an ADSL board. Similarly, for VDSL modulated with Discrete Multi-Tone (DMT), all the tones used are also sent.

In the upstream channel of the DSLAM port, the reflected version of the downstream signal is received by Line Receiver and amplified there. Then said
 5 amplified analog signal is digitized by AFE before it is sent for processing in DSP, in which parameters of the reflected signal, such as amplitude and frequency, will be obtained by analyzing digitized version of said reflect signal.

In accordance with this invention, the part of downstream signal can be modulated with PRBS (pseudorandom binary sequence) at the DSLAM port, that is,
 10 PRBS is carried by tone 6~31. The PRBS can be generated by the DSP itself in the DSLAM port, or by network management system, and scrambled by the DSP; in any case, these data are used as the modulated testing data.

In the upstream channel of the DSLAM port, when Line Receiver receives the reflected version of the testing data modulated by PRBS, the reflected signal will be
 15 amplified at Line Receiver, converted from analog to digital at AFE, and transferred to DSP for processing. DSP will then obtain the demodulated testing data of the reflected signal.

In accordance with this invention, on one hand, parameters such as amplitudes and frequencies of the reflected signal and the transmitted signal corresponding to the
 20 reflected signal can be compared based on the parameters and testing data obtained, thereby obtaining the SNR of the reflected signal and the downstream signal of the DSLAM port, that is, the SNR of the upstream channel and the downstream channel of the DSLAM port; on the other hand, the demodulated testing data can be compared with the modulated testing data and bit error rate is calculated, thereby determining
 25 whether the hybrid, Line driver, Line receiver, AFE, and DSP of each channel in the DSLAM port are normal.

When the above described method is implemented, signals are transmitted directly to the outside from a DSLAM with ADSL, or a DSLAM with VDSL, or a DSLAM with SHDSL, or a hybrid fiber co-axial (HFC) port with co-axial cable, and
 30 the output impedance of the port is made mismatch, in order to make the said transmitted signals reflected at the port. Correspondingly, the reflected signals are

received by the upstream channel of the same port. Then, after appropriate processing and analysis of the reflected signals, it can be decided whether the DSLAM port with ADSL, VDSL, or SHDSL, or the HFC port is normal.

When the above described method is implemented, PRBS may be produced in
 5 the DSP of a DSLAM with ADSL, or with VDSL, or with SHDSL, or in the DSP of
 an HFC port and then signals are modulated with PRBS. Then the modulated signals
 are sent to the output of the DSLAM port or HFC port while the RT of the port
 operates to disconnect the output of the port, making the port disconnected, and
 accordingly, making the output impedance thereof mismatch so that there will be the
 10 reflected version of the transmitted signals at the disconnected port. Correspondingly,
 the reflected signals are received in the upstream channel of the same port. Then, after
 appropriate processing and analysis of the reflected signals, it can be decided whether
 the DSLAM port with ADSL, VDSL, or SHDSL, or the HFC port is normal.

When the above-said method is implemented, PRBS may also be produced in the
 15 network management of the digital subscriber broadband service system that
 administers the DSLAM or HFC. Then the signals are modulated with the PRBS in
 the DSLAM with ADSL, VDSL, or SHDSL, or in the HFC port with co-axial cable
 before being transmitted to the output end of the DSLAM or HFC port while the RT
 of the port operates to disconnect the output of the port, making the port disconnected,
 20 and accordingly, making the output impedance thereof mismatch so that there will be
 at the output the reflected version of the transmitted signals. Correspondingly, the
 reflected signals are received in the upstream channel of the same port. Then, after
 appropriate processing and analysis of the reflected signals, it can be decided whether
 the DSLAM port with ADSL, VDSL, or SHDSL, or the HFC port is normal.

25 Referring to Figure 6, a DSLAM with ADSL is herein taken as an example. In
 order to improve the accuracy of the test, a calibrating relay RJ may as well be
 connected to the DSLAM port under testing while RJ connects said port to an external
 standard load of resistor R of 100Ω for calibration.

Similarly, the calibration circuit corresponding to DSLAM with VDSL or
 30 SHDSL, or corresponding to HFC port with co-axial cable has the same structure as
 the above described calibration circuit except that the resistance of the resistor R used

is different. Typically, the resistance of this resistor R equals to the resistance of the device that is connected with the tested DSLAM or HFC port before the output impedance thereof is mismatch, for instance, the modem. This is because there also exist at the tested port reflected signals when the port is connected with a normal load, for instance, a modem. The purpose of this calibrating resistor R, therefore, is to obtain and record the normal reflected signals through R. When a test of the port is carried out, accurate reflected signals can be obtained by subtracting the pre-recorded normal reflected signals from the reflected signals actually tested. In this way, parameters of the obtained reflected signals, such as amplitude, frequency, and phase thereof, will give a genuine test result of the DSLAM or HFC port.

In this invention, it is also possible not to make the impedance of the DSLAM or HFC port mismatch but to directly receive the reflected version of the downstream signals transmitted from the DSLAM or HFC port. However, the amplitude of that reflected version of the signals is not high.

The technical solution described above has the following beneficial effects:

1. The scope of test is wide. If the testing data are sent from the network management, the all paths within the DSLAM can be tested; if PRBS is sent from the DSP of the DSLAM itself, the downstream channel of DSP, AFE, Line driver, and hybrid as well as the upstream channel of Line receiver, AFE, and DSP can be tested. Meanwhile it is possible to calculate the bit error rate in accordance with the prior art.
2. The cost of test is low. The solution is completely based on the existing hardware. There is no need of incorporating any external devices except for performing the testing software. Compared with solutions in the prior art, this method has an obvious advantage in terms of cost.
3. The operation of test is simple. Compared with the prior art, this solution can accomplish the test by only a command. There is no need of assigning personnel to the location of DSLAM, thus reduces maintenance expense.
4. The test is highly reliable. As modem is not required, the test result is no longer depending on the interoperability between CO and modems or the reliability of the modems themselves.

It should be appreciated that the description above is only preferred embodiments of this invention and accordingly, to be regarded in an illustrative rather than restrictive sense. Any modification, equivalent replacement or improvement without deviating from the spirit and principle of this invention should be included in the
5 protection scope of this invention.

Claims

1. A method for testing a port of a broadband access device in a digital subscriber line (DSL) broadband access system, comprising:
 - transmitting a signal over a downstream channel of the port of the broadband access
 - 5 device in Central Office (CO) equipment, making the signal reflect at an output of the port;
 - receiving and processing the reflected signal over an upstream channel of the port, and obtaining characteristic parameters of the reflected signal; and
 - evaluating the port according to the characteristic parameters.
- 10 2. A method according to Claim 1, wherein the step of making the signal reflected at the output of the port comprises, making the output impedance of the port of the broadband access device mismatch.
3. A method according to Claim 2, wherein the step of making the output impedance of the port of the broadband access device mismatch comprises:
 - 15 making the output of the port of the broadband access device disconnected;
 - or making the output of the port of the broadband access device short-circuited;
 - or connecting the output of the port of the broadband access device to a load having a predefined resistance.
4. A method according to Claim 1, further comprising:
 - 20 measuring a reflected signal of the port of the broadband access device under a normal output impedance before obtaining the characteristic parameters of the reflected signal, and subtracting the reflected signal under the normal output impedance from the reflected signal received to obtain an accurate reflected signal for processing.
5. A method according to Claim 4, wherein the measuring a reflected signal of the
- 25 port of the broadband access device under a normal output impedance comprises, connecting the output of the port of the broadband access device with a calibrating device.

6. A method according to Claim 5, wherein the calibrating device is configured with at least a calibrating relay and a calibrating impedance connecting to the port via a calibrating relay.

7. A method according to Claim 1, wherein the signal transmitted over the

5 downstream channel of the port of the broadband access device comprises signals in the frequency bands of both the upstream and downstream channels of the port of the broadband access device, or

signals in the frequency band of the upstream channel of the port of the broadband access device; or

10 signals in the frequency bands of the downstream channel of the port of the broadband access device.

8. A method according to Claim 7, wherein the signal is modulated by a pseudo random binary sequence, PRBS, which is generated by a digital signal processor (DSP) in the port of the broadband access device;

15 or generated by a network management system and scrambled by the DSP in the port of the broadband access device.

9. A method according to Claim 1, wherein the processing the reflected signals and obtaining characteristic parameters of the reflected signal comprises:

20 amplifying the reflected signal over the upstream channel of the port of the broadband access device and converting the reflect analog signal to digital version to obtain a digitized version of the reflected signal;

making Discrete Fourier Transform for the digitized version of the reflected signal and obtaining the characteristic parameters of the reflected signal by demodulation;

25 and wherein evaluating the port according to the characteristic parameters comprises:

comparing the characteristic parameters with the parameters of the transmitted signal to obtain SNR of the port of the broadband access device, and determining in accordance with the characteristic parameters whether components in the port of the broadband access device are normal.

30 10. An apparatus for port test of a broadband access device in a DSL broadband access system, comprising:

a digital signal processor, adapted to generate a digital signal and send the digital signal to an Analog Front End, AFE, to receive a reflected digital signal from the AFE, to process the reflected digital signal, to obtain characteristic parameters of the reflected digital signal, and to evaluate the port according to the characteristic parameters;

5 the AFE, adapted to convert the digital signal received from the digital signal processor into an analog signal and send the analog signal to a line receiver, to receive a reflected analog signal from the line receiver, to convert the reflected analog signal into the reflected digital signal and to send the reflected digital signal to the digital signal processor;

10 the line driver, adapted to amplify the analog signal from the AFE and send the amplified analog signal to the port through a hybrid circuit, to receive the reflected analog signal from the port through the hybrid circuit and to send the reflected analog signal to the AFE.

15 11. An apparatus according to Claim 10, wherein an output impedance of the port is made to mismatch.

12. An apparatus according to Claim 10, further comprising a calibrating device, which consists at least of a calibrating impedance operable to connect to an output of the port via a calibrating relay while testing.

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