REVIEWED BY JOEL E. NATT

"Planet Broadband" is not a Star Trek episode or some other sci-fi title. It is the title of a book that answers the questions, Where did the term "broadband" originate and why is it used when discussing cable Internet services? When I first received the book, my initial thoughts focused on the cable Internet environment, but this short book also presents the DSL side, as well as explaining how the concept of broadband communication evolved and where it might go in the future.

The book is essentially a history of the growth of the Internet and how the concept of broadband was developed. I can foresee future generations of information technology students reading this book in college courses.

A detail-oriented reader, I read the book in about eight hours; that may seem slow but, considering the topic and the events occurring within the world of telecommunications, was better than I expected. As I read, I paused from time to time to think about how the points made by Yassini are either already occurring or could be implemented. Additionally, I found enlightenment in the knowledge that both DSL and cable Internet are actually considered broadband. While the cable companies have a tendency to advertise themselves as broadband services, in reality they are only one of several kinds of broadband. Some of the services presented include virtual training, which many universities are now offering, and virtual meetings between individuals spread around the world. While *Planet Broadband* does point out that everything is not immediately on-demand right now, in time we can witness more and more services going that way.

Yassini discusses potential uses of the technology, such as checking what's in your refrigerator at home from work, or your washing machine placing a service call to the manufacturer before you know there is a problem. These are features of a broadband planet, and within time our children and their children will not know a world where modems connected to the Internet or downloads took hours. But as you read, you realize that while today constitutes the birth of broadband, this book serves more as an introduction to the Internet of tomorrow and, as such, is a must-read.

To prove the point that *Planet Broadband* is an introduction, my baby boomer mother, who works in the cable industry in customer service, read it cover to cover in one day and then told me, "This is where we are going." If a 50+-year-old parent can see it, surely the world will be there some day.

Near the end of the book, Yassini focuses on telecommuting, comparing it to working at the office. While he clearly points out that telecommuting is not for everyone, or always appropriate, it has productivity advantages and will become increasingly common. I think one of the best examples he cites is the MCI commercial of a woman working at home and changing a presentation in real time for clients and co-workers halfway across the country. That image is an example of how the world has changed thanks to the advances of broadband and the ability to telecommute.

Planet Broadband is not designed for the IT world so much as the general public, though I would recommend it as an excellent addition to anyone's library. For management it is an excellent resource to justify a telecommuting policy or practice, providing a good argument to upgrade from the modem and narrow band to the world of high-speed Internet.