

Wireless Last-Mile Copper Alternative – ‘Tuanz Topics’, April/May 2006

Stretching copper to a new home or temporary dwelling can run into thousands of dollars, but until recently this was the only option for users who wanted the fax and computer communications functionality of fixed wireline connections.

The Telular SX5T Phonecell fixed cellular terminal and accessories comes in at under \$1000, offering a much cheaper alternative to last-mile copper installations in most situations, according to New Zealand exclusive distributor EDAC Electronics of Christchurch.

EDAC director Henry Bettle said Phonecell is a versatile device that has rural and central city applications.

“It can be used as a wireline replacement, so there’s no need for copper. You can use a standard analogue fax machine, phone and run your computer through it to check emails and receive electronic faxes,” Bettle said.

Phonecell uses Telecom’s CDMA network to provide Internet access and telephony services. Internet use is charged at the standard Telecom mobile data card rate and users can choose the company’s Go 1 Bill Mates Rates option to make outgoing calls at prepay rates.

A smallish, inconspicuous box, Phonecell supports caller ID, call-waiting, three-way calling and call forwarding service as well as up to five phones. EDAC also has available an AC-DC switching power supply and four AA batteries can provide up to one-hour talk time and three-and-a-half hours standby in emergency situations. An external battery back-up unit that provides up to three-and-a-half hours talk time and up to 15 hours standby time is also available.

A range of use-specific aerials is available, Bettle said, allowing the unit to be used in different settings such as holiday houses and portacoms on construction sites.