

On-Demand Multicast Slot Allocation Scheme For Active Optical Access Network Using PLZT High-Speed Optical Switches

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Abstract—This paper proposes an on-demand multicast slot allocation scheme for an active optical access network that uses Mach-Zehnder-type high-speed optical switches, which are achieved by the Plumbum Lanthanum Zirconate Titanate (PLZT) switching technology. The Active Optical Network, called ActiON, is based on slot-based switching. Compared to the Passive Optical Network (PON), ActiON quadruples the number of subscribers (128 users) per optical line terminal (OLT) and doubles the maximum transmission distance (40 km) between OLT and optical network units (ONUs). However, as ActiON uses slot-based switching, it needs a large number of slots to deliver multicast contents to the requesting users. This greatly lowers network utilization rates. The proposed multicast slot allocation scheme overcomes this problem to provide on-demand multicast services, while keeping the advantages of ActiON. Multicast delivery is realized by running the Mach-Zehnder-type high-speed optical switch elements in distribution mode, which forces the switch to behave as an optical splitter. The proposed scheme iteratively solves the integer linear programming (ILP) problem to associate multicast users with slots. Numerical results show that the proposed scheme dramatically reduces the required number of slots, compared to non-multicast ActiON and provides comparable the performance of bandwidth efficiency to 10 G-EPON, and the required computation time of the proposed scheme is less than 0.3 sec, which is feasible for on-demand services.

Index Terms—Access protocol, Optical fiber networks, Optical switches, and Time division multiple access.

I. INTRODUCTION

The Passive Optical Network (PON) [1] system is widely used as an access network. Gigabit Ethernet Passive Optical Network (GE-PON) [2] is the representative example of the access network.

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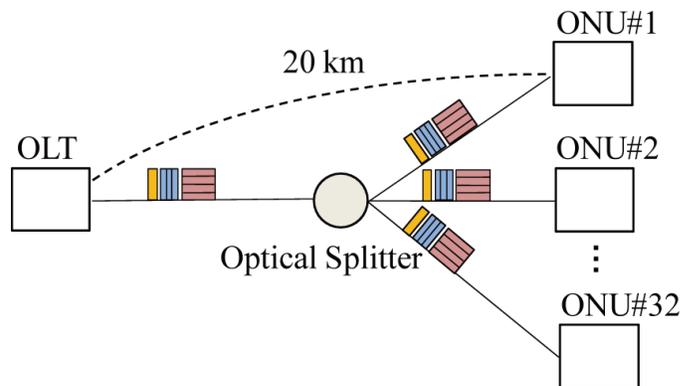


Fig. 1. PON architecture.

Figure 1 shows that the PON architecture consists of three components: Optical Line Terminal (OLT), which connects to backbone network; Optical Network Unit (ONU), which communicates with the user terminal; and an optical splitter. The data transmission of PON is that all data is broadcasted by the optical splitter to all ONUs, and each ONU selects its own data from all data. The current target in access networks is the 10 Gigabit Ethernet Passive Optical Network (10 G-EPON) [3]. The advantages of PON include low-cost and low-power consumption due to its use of a passive optical splitter.

However, PON systems are limited in terms of the maximum number of ONUs (32) and the maximum transmission distance (20 km) between OLT and ONUs. This is because the optical power is divided at the splitter and decreases as the number of ONUs increases. Moreover, PON system is a low-security architecture in principle because each ONU receives all signals from OLT. A malicious user can intercept all data.

PON systems have been extensively studied for next generation optical broadband access networks. Wavelength Division Multiplexing (WDM)-PON [4] [5] provides high-bandwidth and high-security by using a unique wavelength to each ONU. However, WDM-PON does not achieve the high bandwidth efficiency because the number of available wavelengths is limited to each ONU. Long-Reach (LR)-PON [6] [7] extends the transmission distance of PON systems by exploiting optical amplifiers and WDM technologies. However, LR-PON consumes highly the power consumption by using optical amplifiers and its security is low.

To increase the bandwidth efficiency and provides highly secure services with longer distances than conventional PON systems [3], active access networks using packet-based optical

switches were presented [8]–[10]. The literatures provide longer transmission distance than conventional PON systems and high-security by using optical packet switches without optical buffers. However, analyzing each packet’s header for packet-by-packet switching with Optical/Electrical (O/E) conversions is required. It becomes a bottleneck and is not cost-effective for the 10 or more Gbps high-bandwidth environments. Moreover, the access network architectures with packet-based switching do not provide transparent transmission without O/E/O conversions.

To achieve transparent transmission without O/E conversion, while keeping the advantages of active access networks [8]–[10], the active optical access network using slot-based optical switches has been presented. It is called Active Optical Network (ActiON) [11]. ActiON employs Mach-Zehnder-type Plumbum Lanthanum Zirconate Titanate (PLZT) high-speed optical switches [12]–[14]. It replaces an optical splitter, which is used in PON systems, with a slot-based switch to make the optical power loss independent of the splitter number. It quadruples the number of subscribers (128 users) per OLT and doubles the maximum transmission distance (40 km) between OLT and ONUs, compared to 10G-EPON. Moreover, ActiON provides a high-security architecture and transparent transmission without O/E conversion because each ONU receives only own data by PLZT switching technology.

The demands that the access network support multicast delivery are increasing with the spread of broadcast service. The broadcast services in an access network should be provided in a scalable and secure manner according to users’ requirements. In PON systems for multicast delivery, the multicast data is broadcasted to all ONUs using an optical splitter. The PON systems may increase the bandwidth efficiency for multicast delivery thanks to the broadcast nature.

However, the PON systems do not provide a scalable and high security architecture. Some ONUs which do not belong to the same multicast group receive non-related multicast data from OLT.

On the other hand, ActiON provides a scalable and secure access network by high-speed slot-based optical switches. However, as ActiON uses slot-based switching, it needs a large number of slots to deliver multicast contents to the requesting users. This greatly lowers the utilization rate of the network.

This paper proposes a multicast slot allocation scheme for on-demand multicast services that overcomes this problem, while keeping the advantages of ActiON. This paper is an extended version of [15], where the extensive literature surveys are described, discussions on the structure of the PLZT optical switch by using the experimental results and the control of switches for multicast delivery are extensively added and the proposed scheme are described in a mathematical, and the comparison between existing approaches and our approach is described in the related work. Numerical results show that the proposed scheme dramatically reduces the required number of slots, compared to non-multicast ActiON and provides comparable the performance of bandwidth efficiency to 10 G-EPON, and the required computation time of the proposed scheme is less than 0.3 sec, which is applicable to on-demand services.

The remaining sections of this paper are organized as follows. Section II describes the ActiON system, Section III describes the proposed multicast slot allocation scheme. Section IV describes the heuristic approach for the multicast

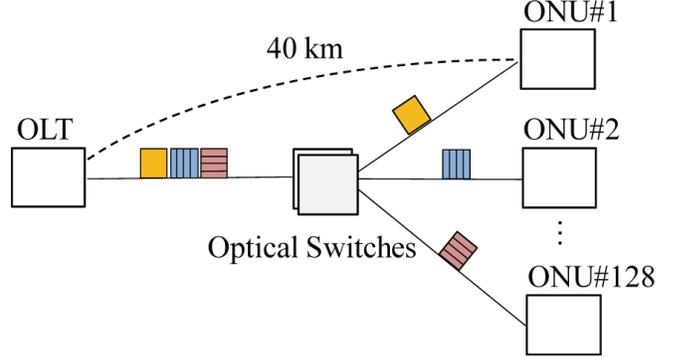


Fig. 2. ActiON architecture.

slot allocation scheme. Section V shows the results of slot allocation via the ILP solver [16]. Section VI shows the related works. Finally, Section VII describes our conclusions.

II. ACTIVE OPTICAL NETWORK

A. Architecture

Figure 2 shows the basic ActiON architecture [11]. Two optical switches (Upstream switch and Downstream switch) are set between the OLT and ONUs.

B. Structure of the 1×128 PLZT optical switch

PLZT 10 nsec high-speed optical switches are used in ActiON. Figure 3 shows the structure of a 1×128 PLZT optical switch [17]. The 1×128 PLZT optical switch sets 1×2 optical switch elements in a multistage (7 stages) configuration. The 1×2 optical switch element is a Mach-Zehnder-type wave-guide structure [12]–[14], so the optical signal is switched by changing the voltage applied to the electrodes A or B. Figure 4 shows the driving the Mach-Zehnder-type optical switch. The voltage (9.5V) applied to the only electrodes A sets the cross state in Figure 5 and the voltage (9.0V) applied to the only electrodes B yields the bar state in Figure 6. We refer to these states as the switching mode.

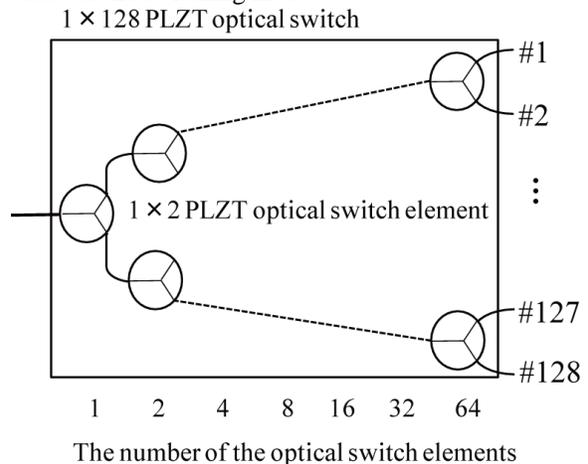


Fig. 3. Structure of the PLZT optical switch.

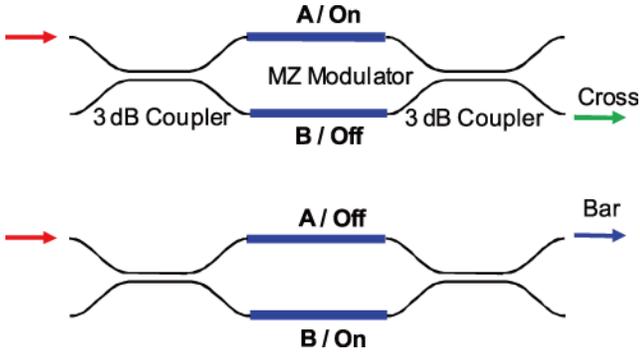


Fig. 4. Driving the Mach-Zehnder-type optical switch as switching mode.

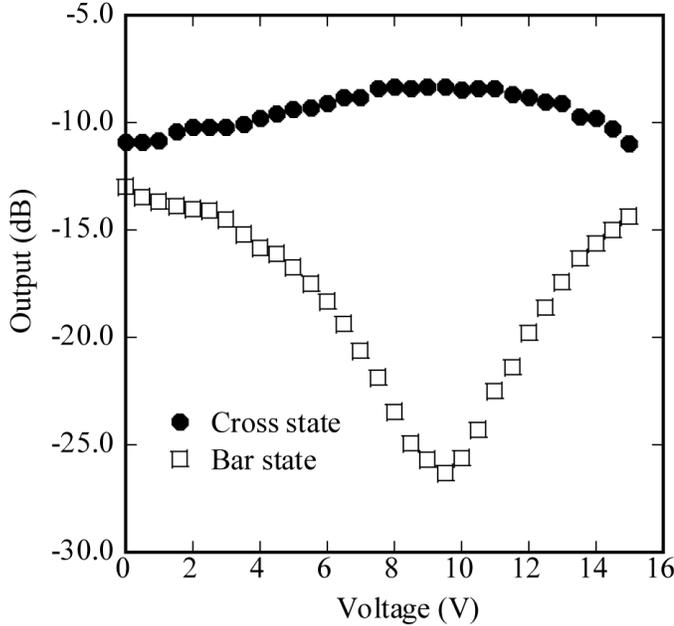


Fig. 5. Changing optical signal by the voltage applied to only electrodes A.

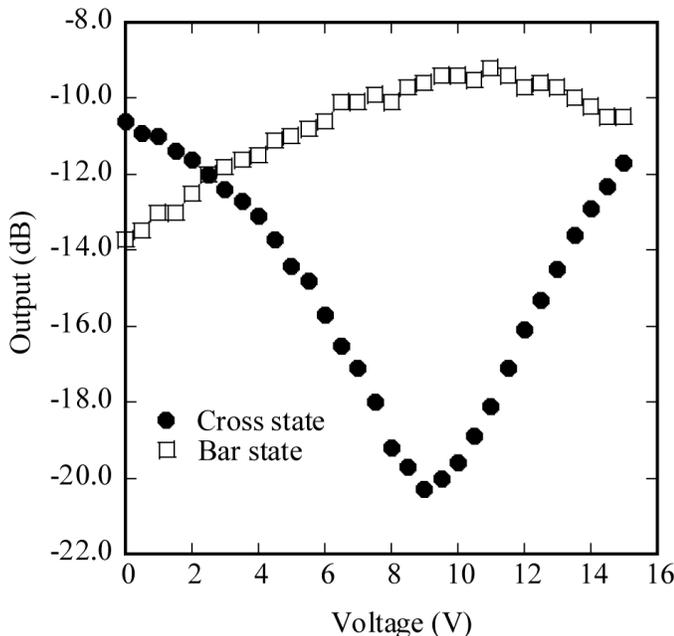


Fig. 6. Changing optical signal by the voltage applied to only electrodes B.

C. Control of switches

In ActiON, the Multi-Point Control Protocol (MPCP) [3] is adopted for compatibility with 10 G-EPON (IEEE802.3av) [3]. The bandwidth is allocated to each user by assigning fixed-length time periods for easy control [18]. This period is called a "slot". The optical switch is controlled by the unit of "cycle", which is composed of multiple slots, see Figure 7.

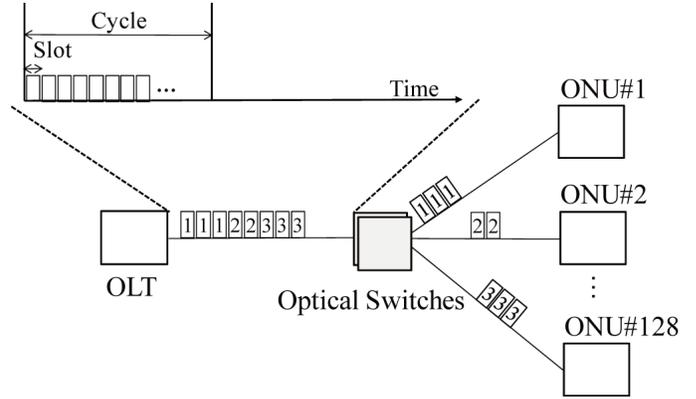
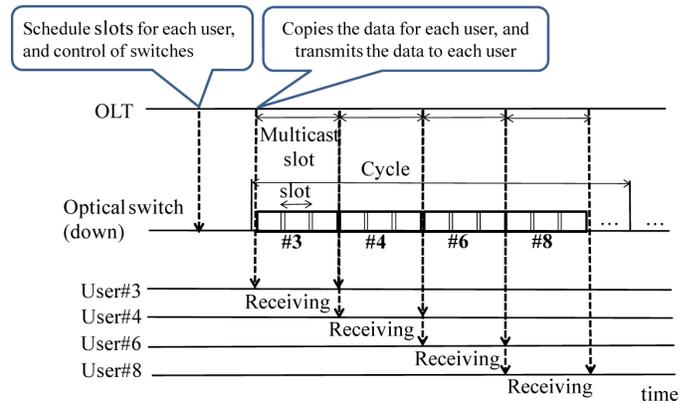


Fig. 7. Slot switching.



✓Number of the multicast slot: 4slot

Fig. 8. Example of multicast slot allocation with the slot switching.

This control of the switches is called "slot switching". Figures 8 and 9 show an example of multicast slot allocation and the control of switches with slot switching. A multicast slot is a set of several slots that are used to deliver multicast contents. To simplify the discussion on the slot switching, we focus on the downstream on the multicast delivery. The 1×8 PLZT optical switch, which sets 1×2 optical switch elements in three-stage configuration, are used. Users (ONUs) #3, #4, #6, and #8 are multicast users. First of all, each user transmits the demand traffic to OLT. Next, OLT schedules several slots (in this example, three slots per multicast slot) for each user by calculating the demand traffic of each user, transmits the switching control message to the optical switches, and transmits multicast data to that user in the assigned slot. ActiON does not directly support multicast delivery, so OLT copies the data for each user and transmits the data to each user by slot switching. The number of multicast slots needed is four, in other words, the number of slots is 12 (= 3×4). The number of slots required

increases with the number of the multicast users, so the utilization efficiency of the slot allocation scheme is poor. Our proposed extension of ActiON is introduced below.

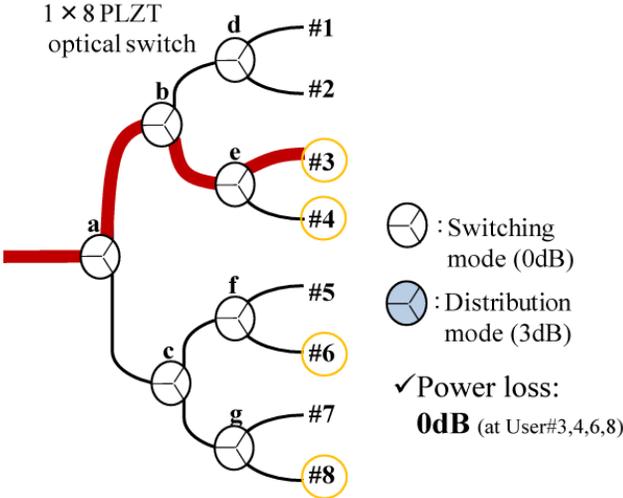


Fig. 9. Control of switches with slot switching.

III. PROPOSED MULTICAST SLOT ALLOCATION SCHEME FOR ACTION

A. Creating the distribution mode

The Mach-Zehnder-type optical switch is possible to yield the multicast state in which the switch acts as a splitter without applying any voltage to both electrodes A and B, see Figure 10, while it was originally intended for only switching mode operation. We call this the distribution mode.

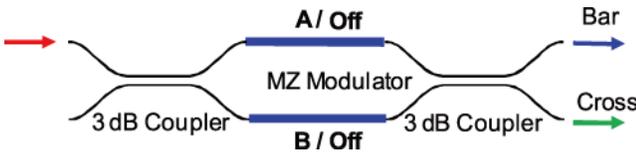


Fig. 10. Driving the Mach-Zehnder type optical switch as distribution mode.

B. Multicast slot allocation scheme for distribution mode operation

Figures 11 and 12 show the examples of multicast slot allocation and the control of switches with the distribution mode. The 1×8 PLZT optical switches which sets 1×2 optical switch elements in three-stage configuration are used. Users #3, #4, #6, and #8 are multicast users. With the distribution mode, the OLT multicasts the data to users #3, #4, #6, and #8 by setting the optical switch elements (a, c, and e) to the distribution mode. Just one multicast slot (three slots) is needed to perform the multicast. Singlecast users are served in the switching mode.

C. Power loss of the optical signal to each user

In the switching mode, the switch suffers no additional intrinsic loss. To simplify the discussion about the constrained condition of each optical switch, we focus on the difference in

power loss between the switching and distribution modes. Figures 9 and 12 show the difference in power loss between the switching and distribution modes. The power loss of the optical signal when using the optical switch in the switching mode is taken to be 0 dB; connection losses are not considered. On the other hand, the power loss of the optical signal when using the optical switch element as the distribution mode is 3dB per switch. In the switching mode, the power loss of the optical signal to each user (#3, #4, #6, and #8) is 0dB (= 0dB + 0dB + 0dB). However, in the distribution mode, the power loss of the optical signal to each user (#3, #4, #6, and #8) is 6dB (= 3dB + 3dB + 0dB), so the optical signal experiences a significant power loss. It is clear that the distribution mode creates a tradeoff between utilization efficiency and the power loss experienced by the optical signal to each multicast user.

D. Limit on the number of optical switch stages in distribution mode

In the PON system, the power loss of the optical signal per user is required to be at most 15dB. The 1×32 optical splitter of the PON system has a multistage (5 stages) arrangement of 1×2 optical splitters, so the power loss of the optical signal is 15dB (= 3dB \times 5). In the multicast slot allocation scheme for ActiON, in order to realize a practical access system with transmission distance 20 km (the maximum transmission in the PON system) or more, the limit on the power loss of the optical signal is 12dB, and the maximum number of optical switch stages using the distribution mode is 4 of 7 stages. This makes it necessary to carefully select which optical switch elements are placed into distribution mode.

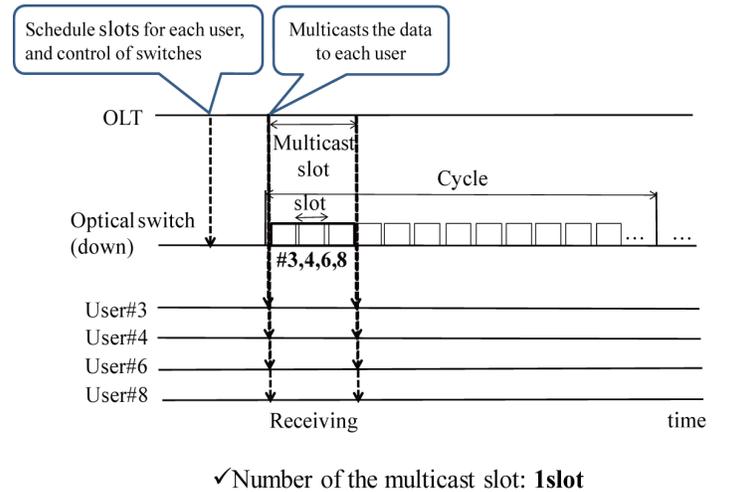


Fig. 11. Example of multicast slot allocation with distribution mode.

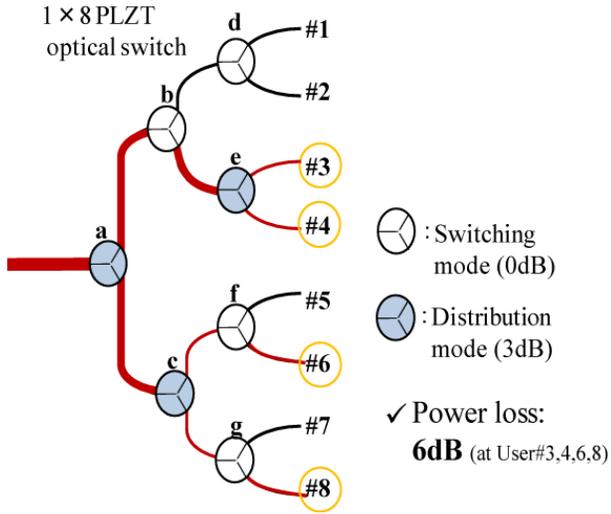


Fig. 12. Control of switches with distribution mode.

IV. HEURISTIC APPROACH FOR THE MULTICAST SLOT ALLOCATION SCHEME

A. Overview

To maximize the bandwidth efficiency, it is necessary to minimize the required number of slots used to realize the multicast service. The naive approach is to consider all possible combinations for the multicast slot allocation. Let x be the number of all possible combinations for N multicast users. x lies in the range of $\prod_{k=1}^{N-2^H} 2^{N-(k-1)2^H} \leq x \leq \prod_{k=1}^N 2^{N-(k-1)}$, where H is the limit on the number of stages. In this approach, with $N = 128$, it is not feasible to obtain the *optimal* solution within practical time. Therefore, the proposed scheme takes a heuristic approach. It tries to find the maximum number of multicast users every multicast slot in a sequential manner, without considering all possible combinations. However, it does not always obtain the *optimal* solution in terms of minimizing the required number of multicast slots. The proposed scheme proceeds as follows.

1) *Step1*: For the first multicast slot deemed available for multicast delivery, the ILP problem described below is solved so as to maximize the number of multicast users that can be assigned to the multicast slot. The satisfied multicast users are eliminated from the set of requesting multicast users.

2) *Step2*: If any requesting multicast user remains unsatisfied, the next multicast slot is allocated following Step 1. Otherwise, multicast slot allocation is completed.

C. Maximizing the number of allocated users

This subsection formulates the optimization problem that maximizes the number of allocated users in Step 1 above.

1) *Definitions*: The nomenclature used in this paper is given below.

- N Number of users. N is set to 2^x , where x is a natural number.
- $\lceil x \rceil$ Smallest integer greater than or equal to x .
- i Index of switch stage, where $0 \leq i \leq \log_2 N$.
- j Index of switch at i th stage, where $1 \leq j \leq \frac{N}{2^i}$.
- u User index, where $1 \leq u \leq N$.
- I Set of i .
- J Set of j .
- J_{odd} Set of j , where j is an odd number.
- S_{ij} i th-stage j th switch.
- l_{ij} Link between $S_{i+1 \lceil \frac{j}{2} \rceil}$ and S_{ij} .
- S_{ou} If user u has a request, $S_{ou} = 1$. Otherwise, $S_{ou} = 0$.
- S_{ij} If S_{ij} is set to distribution mode, $S_{ij} = 1$. If S_{ij} is set to non-distribution mode, $S_{ij} = 0$. ($i \neq 0$)
- L_{ij} If l_{ij} has optical signal, $L_{ij} = 1$. Otherwise, $L_{ij} = 0$.
- H Limit on the number of stages for the optical switch elements using distribution mode.

2) *Formulation*: The ILP problem used to maximize the number of multicast user per multicast slot is described below.

$$\max \sum_{u, \text{where } S_{ou}=1} L_{ou} \quad (1a)$$

$$\text{s.t. } L_{i+1 \lceil \frac{j}{2} \rceil} + S_{i \lceil \frac{j}{2} \rceil} = L_{ij} + L_{ij+1}, \quad i \in I, j \in J \quad (1b)$$

$$L_{i+1 \lceil \frac{j}{2} \rceil} \geq S_{i \lceil \frac{j}{2} \rceil}, \quad j \in J_{odd} \quad (1c)$$

$$\sum_{i \in I} S_{i \lceil \frac{2^{p-1}}{2^i} \rceil} \leq H, \quad 1 \leq p \leq \frac{N}{2} \quad (\text{p:integer}) \quad (1d)$$

The objective function in Eq. (1a) indicates the selection of the maximum number of multicast users. The constrained conditions in Eqs. (1b) and (1c) indicate the relationships between the use of each optical switch element and the optical power. Figures 13, 14, and 15 show three relationships between the use of each optical switch element and the optical power. The constrained condition in Eq. (1d) indicates the limit on the number of stages in which the optical switch elements are set in distribution mode.

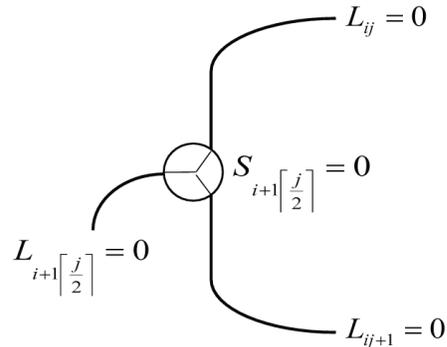


Fig. 13. Constrained conditions of each optical switch element (Upper link of the optical switch has no optical power and distribution mode is not used).

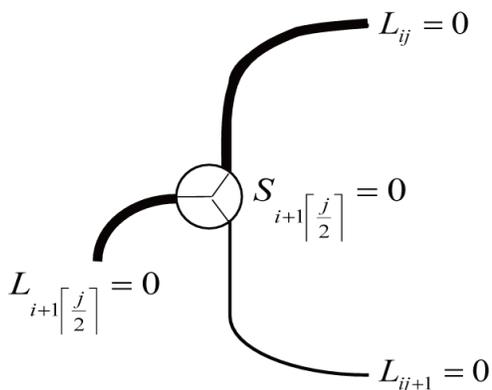


Fig. 14. Constrained condition of each optical switch element (Upper link of the optical switch has an optical power and distribution mode is not used).

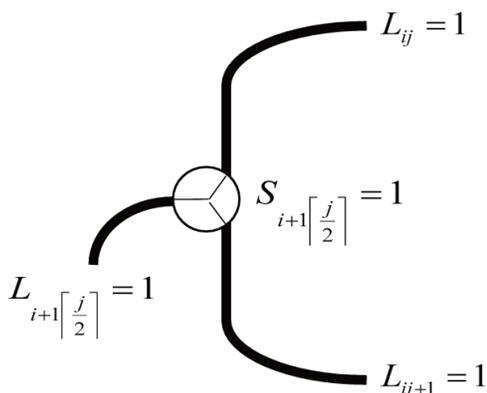


Fig. 15. Constrained condition of each optical switch element (Upper link of the optical switch has an optical power and distribution mode is used).

V. SIMULATION OF THE MULTICAST SLOT ALLOCATION SCHEME

This simulation evaluated the required number of multicast slots for the multicast in each slot allocation and the maximum computation time for selecting multicast users in the proposed allocation. The simulator was coded by using the C language combined with GNU Linear Programming Kit (GLPK) [16], which is an ILP solver. Parameters used in our simulation are shown below. The number of ONUs is 128. 10, 20, 30, 40, 50, 60, 70, 80, 90, 100, 110, 120, and 128 of all users (randomly selected) are taken as demanding the same multicast content. The number of the trials was set at 10^6 for each proportion of the multicast users. The 1×128 PLZT optical switch has a 7 stage cascade of 1×2 optical switch elements and the maximum number of optical switch stages is four. The multicast slot allocation scheme is run on the PC whose processor is an Intel Pentium 4 2.80GHz, and which has 256MB RAM.

Figure 16 shows the number of multicast slots required to satisfy the multicast user demands. To maximize the bandwidth efficiency, it is necessary to minimize the required number of slots used to realize the multicast service. At all loads examined, the proposed slot allocation scheme closely approached the theoretical lower bound, which is the minimum number of multicast slots for any request pattern. The proposed scheme dramatically reduced the number of multicast slots and

increased the bandwidth efficiency, compared to the conventional ActiON. The theoretical lower bound is the number of multicast slots obtained by statically allocating to 2^H users for each slot. It is solved by using $\lceil \frac{R}{2^H} \rceil$. R is the number of multicast users. H is the limit on the number of stages for the optical switch elements using distribution mode. In this simulation, H is set at 4. For example, when the number of users is 30, the theoretical lower bound becomes 2 ($= \lceil \frac{30}{2^4} \rceil$).

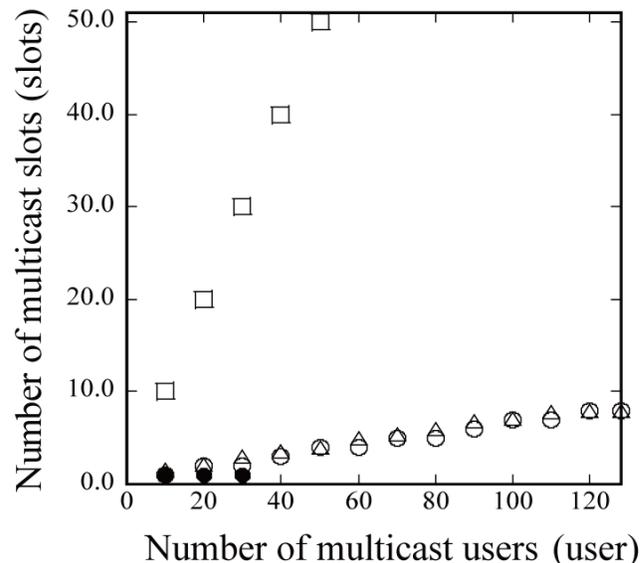


Fig. 16. Number of multicast slots versus multicast user demand.

Figure 16 also compares the required number of multicast slots between 10 GE-PON and the proposed scheme. In 10 G-EPON, the maximum number of ONUs is 32 and the maximum transmission distance is 20 km. In conventional ActiON, the maximum number of ONUs is extended to 128 and the maximum transmission distance is extended to 40 km. In the proposed slot allocation scheme for ActiON, the required number of multicast slots is only a few slots larger than that of 10 GE-PON within 30 users. This means that the proposed scheme provides comparable the performance of bandwidth efficiency to 10 GE-PON when the number of users is small, while the proposed scheme extends the limitation of the number of users for 10 GE-PON to 128.

Figures 17, 18, 19, 20, and 21 show the frequency distributions of the number of the multicast slots for the multicast user demands considered. For all demands, the distributions are very tight. The average differences between the number of multicast slots obtained by the proposed scheme and the theoretical lower bounds are shown in Table I. The difference between the maximum number of slots and the theoretical lower bound is at most 1 regardless of the level of demand.

Figure 22 shows that the maximum computation time of the

proposed scheme is less than 0.3 sec, which well suits on-demand services.

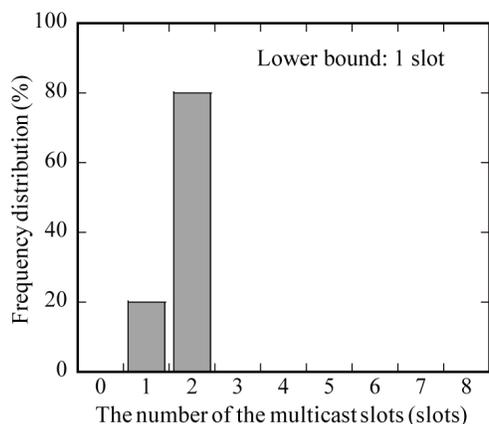


Fig. 17. Frequency distribution of the number of multicast slots versus multicast user demand (Proportion of the multicast users: 10 percent).

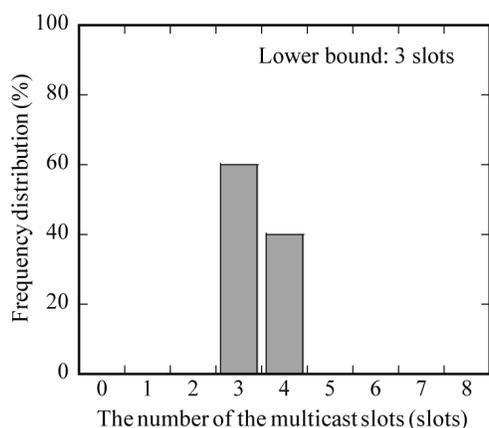


Fig. 18. Frequency distribution of the number of multicast slots versus multicast user demand (Proportion of the multicast users: 30 percent).

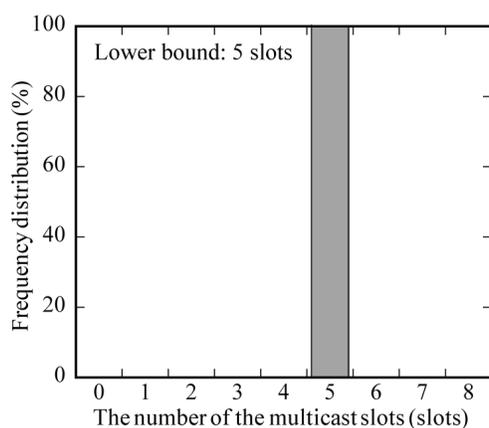


Fig. 19. Frequency distribution of the number of multicast slots versus multicast user demand (Proportion of the multicast users: 50 percent).

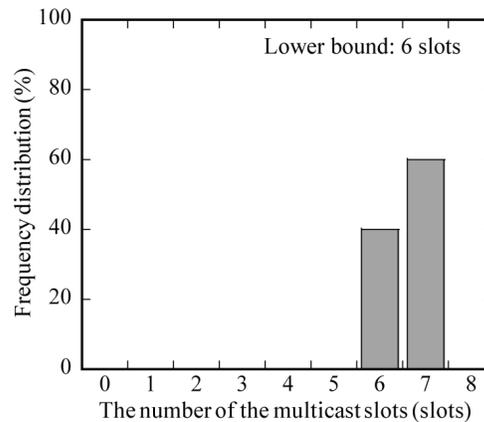


Fig. 20. Frequency distribution of the number of multicast slots versus multicast user demand (Proportion of the multicast users: 70 percent).

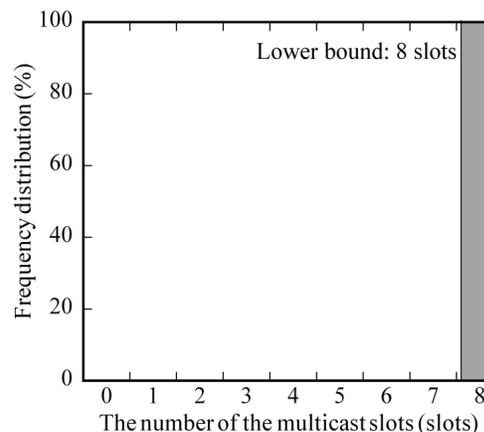


Fig. 21. Frequency distribution of the number of multicast slots versus multicast user demand (Proportion of the multicast users: 90 percent).

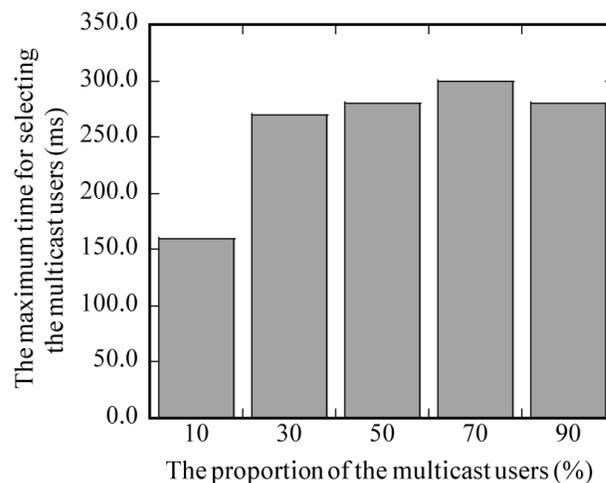


Fig. 22. Time to find the maximum number of multicast users per multicast slot.

TABLE I
Comparison of the number of multicast slots between the proposed and theoretical lower bounds

Proportion of the multicast users (%)	10	30	50	70	90
Average differences between the number of multicast slots obtained by the proposed scheme and the theoretical lower bounds	0.8	0.4	0	0.6	0

TABLE II
Comparison between existing approaches and our approach

		Applicability	Target distance	Maximum number of users	Bandwidth	Security	Utilization efficiency of Multicast	Switching control	References
Passive Optical Network	10G-EPON	Access	20 km	32 users	10 Gbps	Low	High	N.A	[3]
	WDM-PON	Access & Metro	60 km	192 users	1Gbps per user	High	Low	N.A	[4] [5]
	LR-PON	Access & Metro	100 km	1024 users	10 Gbps	Low	High	N.A	[6] [7]
Active Optical Network	Packet-based switching	Access	40 km	128 users	1 Gbps	High	Low	Required	[8]–[10]
	Slot-based switching (ActiON)	Access	40 km	128 users	10 Gbps	High	Low	Required	[11]
	Slot-based switching with multicast functions	Access	40 km	128 users	10 Gbps	High	High	Required	Our approach

VI. RELATED WORK

Table II compares existing approaches to our approach, which summarizes Sections I, II, and V. The categories are applicability, target distance, maximum number of users, bandwidth, security, utilization efficiency of Multicast delivery, and switching control. Our approach provides a scalable and secure access network, while supporting multicast delivery in an efficient manner. It requires a mechanism to control optical switches as presented in Section II. This is an additional function compared to the conventional PON approaches.

VII. CONCLUSION

This paper proposed an on-demand multicast slot allocation scheme for ActiON. The proposed scheme assumes the use of cascaded PLZT optical switch elements that are run in the newly described distribution mode, which forces the element to behave as an optical splitter. The proposed scheme solves an ILP problem to maximize the number of multicast users that can receive service in each slot. Numerical results show that the proposed scheme dramatically reduces the required number of slots compared to the original ActiON and that the required computation time of the proposed scheme is less than 0.3 sec, which is acceptable for on-demand services.

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