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## Powerline standard stuck in stalemate

HomePlug/Panasonic proposal fails in latest vote

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SAN JOSE, Calif. — A vote Friday (July 11) to confirm a proposal from the HomePlug Alliance and the Panasonic-led HD-PLC group for a powerline home networking standard failed to get the required number of backers. The two players have one more chance to get their proposal approved by the IEEE P1901 group in a vote that may come up at a meeting in Madrid in late September.

The 1901 effort has been stuck in a standoff since [last fall](#) when it initially picked the HomePlug/HD-PLC proposal. The proposal requires a physical layer (PHY) protocol which can recognize either group's products and prevent interference. It included an option for supporting both group's PHYs so that the networks can share data.

The proposal has been opposed by the Universal Powerline Association which backs the approach of chip maker Design of Systems on Silicon, S.A. A DS2 representative said the company wants a standard with a single PHY that would require all sides to design new chips. The HomePlug/HD-PLC approach would only require companies in those groups to make minor hardware or firmware alterations.

According to IEEE rules, if a second confirming vote on the HomePlug/HD-PLC proposal fails to get approval from 75 percent of the group's members, the 1901 group must re-start its efforts and re-examine any old or new proposals. HomePlug backers said the vote Friday was close and they will work hard to get consensus on their proposal.

It's unclear when the next vote will be held. The agenda for the next meeting in Madrid in September is not yet set, and the group has tabled votes at several past meetings for a variety of reasons.

Some observers said DS2 (Valencia, Spain) could try to pack the Madrid meeting with employees to weigh a vote in its favor. But a representative from the HomePlug Alliance said the slate of members who can vote has already been set.

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Meanwhile, competing groups are moving forward with their own technologies. A representative from Comcast said the HomePlug group hopes to have products for a next-generation of its HomePlug AV spec out in about 18 months. It will support the approach detailed in its proposal to the 1901 group and take into account work-in-progress on the overarching home network standard at the ITU called [G.hn](#), he said.

For its part, DS2 has already demonstrated its next generation technology, a version that delivers as much as 400 Mbits/s at the PHY layer. DS2 has also expressed strong support for G.hn. Even though G.hn is seen as the ultimate goal for a wired home networking standard, the 1901 effort is still important, said Paul Liao, chief technology officer for Panasonic, speaking in an interview [in July](#). One source said carriers are holding off deploying powerline networks until a standard for them is set.

The 1901 group aims to deliver a suite of standards. Besides the in-home networking spec currently being debated, it is also considering access and coexistence standards. Proposals in those areas also failed to win a majority following the failed vote on the in-home network spec.

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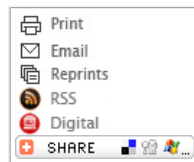
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