

About GAATN

The Greater Austin Area Telecommunications Network (GAATN) in Austin, Texas provides for fiber optic connections to member agencies in order to offer expanded communications services for each of the GAATN participants. This includes the capability for the delivery of data, voice, and video services across the entire Austin metropolitan area.

There are a variety of networking technologies implemented between each participants' locations including Dense Wave Divisions Multiplexing (DWDM), Course Wave Division Multiplexing (CWDM), 10Gigabit Ethernet, Resilient Packet Ring (RPR), and Time Division Multiplexing over IP (TDMoIP). Participants provide a variety of services across the GAATN network including Internet/Internet2 access, voice telephony interconnections and distance learning classes.

GAATN provides services to schools, police stations, fire stations, state agencies, colleges, universities, libraries, court houses and jails. The emergency notification system for a multi-agency multi-county area utilizes GAATN for a high speed backbone in order to transmit geographical information to expedite emergency service delivery.

The flexibility and cost savings for the GAATN public entities increases every year. Due to the growth in the number of users, sites, volume of information and services, the GAATN participants continue expanding their networks to meet rising demand. Governmental entities have tended to lease telecommunications or build their own. In 1993 the governing bodies in Austin chose a third path by approaching the problem from a long range cooperative planning perspective rather than reacting on an individual basis. This cooperation provided a solution that:

1. meets current and anticipated requirements;
2. dramatically improves the flexibility and responsiveness;
3. reduces the ongoing support costs;
4. insures access for governmental entities such as libraries and social service agencies which might not be able to afford the bandwidth and types of access necessary for their mission;
5. adopts common telecommunications standards for sharing voice, video and data;
6. meets standards for federal initiatives for similar networks at the national level; and
7. provides unique opportunities for participants to obtain grant funds.

The network is designed in physical ring configurations, rather than a tree and branch scheme. The system consists of eleven rings. There are multiple interconnections between the rings for increased reliability. There are over 400 participant sites on the 339 miles of GAATN rings. Each ring contains individual single mode fibers owned by each entity.

Each GAATN participant deploys and owns its own equipment on its own strands of fiber. GAATN provides the platform for public entities to provide to the public more efficient delivery of services for governmental and educational functions with cutting edge technology on a state-of-the-art fiber system.

In 2002, the Greater Austin Area Telecommunications Network was one of nine Texas state government information technology projects that [received a "Best of Texas" award](#) from the Center for Digital Government and Government Technology magazine.