# ZITHA TECH SPECIALTY CABLES (Pty) Ltd

# Optical Cross-Connect Board and Optical Module



## Overview

Optical Cross-Connect (OXC) Fundamentals Modern programmable OXCs use an all-optical backplane and electronic control plane (often under SDN) to fully Opti.

## Key Takeaways

OXC boards and optical modules are key components in all-optical networks, enabling dynamic, high-capacity switching of optical signals without converting them to electrical form.Optical Cross-Connect (OXC) Overview

An Optical Cross-Connect (OXC) is a network device that switches optical signals between fiber inputs and outputs while remaining in the optical domain, preserving data-rate and protocol transparency . OXCs are widely used in telecom backbones, data-center interconnects, and high-performance computing networks to dynamically route wavelengths, improve resilience, and optimize bandwidth utilization .

OXC Boards

OXC systems are modular and typically consist of several types of boards:

• All-Optical Backplane: Provides system-level optical cross-connections in an integrated manner, eliminating the need for manual fiber patching. It interconnects multiple input and output fibers through a photonic switching matrix .

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• Optical Tributary Board: Handles local wavelength add/drop functions and supports features like CDG (Colorless, Directionless, Gridless) and CDCG, enabling flexible wavelength management .

• Optical Line Board: Transmits and receives optical signals along the line direction, integrating functions of traditional WSS (Wavelength Selective Switch) boards, optical amplifiers, OSC (Optical Supervisory Channel) boards, and FIU (Fiber Interface Unit) boards. It supports 1D1U deployment, meaning one optical line board per line degree . These boards collectively form a highly integrated, fiber patching-free switching resource pool, improving efficiency for large-granularity services and enabling rapid deployment and capacity expansion .

Optical Modules

Optical modules are pluggable devices that interface with OXC boards to transmit and receive optical signals. They include:

• Transceivers (SFP, QSFP, CFP, etc.): Convert electrical signals from client devices into optical signals for transmission over fiber and vice versa, though in all-optical OXCs, signals often remain optical within the switch .

• Wavelength-Specific Modules: Used in WDM/DWDM systems to handle specific wavelength channels, enabling precise routing through the OXC switching matrix .

• Amplifier Modules: Boost optical signal strength to compensate for losses in long-haul or high-capacity networks .

Key Benefits

• Protocol and Bit-Rate Transparency: Supports multiple client protocols over the same optical path .

• Dynamic Reconfiguration: Enables rapid rerouting of wavelengths for traffic engineering and protection .

• Scalability: Modular boards and optical modules allow growth in port count and wavelength capacity .

• Reduced Latency and Power Consumption: By avoiding O-E-O conversions, OXCs maintain high-speed, low-latency transmission while lowering operational costs .

Deployment Scenarios

OXCs with these boards and modules are deployed in:

• Telecom Backbones: Core and regional nodes for dynamic wavelength routing and protection .

• Data Centers: Interconnecting multiple switches or sites with high-bandwidth optical circuits .

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• High-Performance Computing and AI Clusters: Where ultra-low latency and energy efficiency are critical . In summary, OXC boards provide the structural and functional framework for optical switching, while optical modules enable signal interfacing, amplification, and wavelength management, together forming the backbone of modern all-optical networks .

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