

Data Center Optical Interconnect



AI Overview

Data center optical interconnects transmit data using light, enabling high-speed, low-latency, and energy-efficient communication between servers, switches, and racks. Core Components and Operation Optical interconnects replace traditional electrical connections with light-based signaling, using photons instead of electrons to carry data. The process begins with an electrical-to-optical conversion at the transmitter, where a light source—typically a semiconductor laser or LED—encodes digital data into pulses of light. These pulses travel through a transmission medium, such as optical fiber or silicon photonics waveguides, which guide the light with minimal loss and without electromagnetic interference. At the receiver, a photodetector converts the light back into electrical signals for processing by computing devices. These elements—light source, medium, and photodetector—are often integrated into modular transceivers for easy deployment in data center hardware.

Advantages Over Electrical Interconnects

Optical interconnects offer several key benefits compared to copper-based electrical connections:

- High Bandwidth:** Using techniques like Wavelength Division Multiplexing (WDM), multiple data streams can be transmitted simultaneously on different light wavelengths, allowing a single fiber to carry terabits per second.
- Low Latency:** Light travels faster and with less signal degradation, which is critical for AI workloads and high-performance computing (HPC) that require rapid, synchronized communication.
- Energy Efficiency:** Optical links reduce resistive heating and eliminate repeated optical-to-electrical conversions, lowering power consumption.
- Scalability:** Optical interconnects support high-density connections within racks (top-of-rack switches) and across data centers (Data Center Interconnect, DCI), enabling seamless expansion and resource sharing.

Advanced Architectures

Modern data centers increasingly use optical circuit switching (OCS), which establishes dedicated light p...

Article Content

Google's High-Speed Interconnect Architecture to Push 800G+ Optical ...

Google's next-generation TPU, Ironwood, integrates a 3D Torus network topology with the Apollo optical circuit switch (OCS) all-optical network, marking a major step forward in AI data

Co-Packaged Optics (CPO) Market Trends 2026: AI Data Center Optical ...

Explore the future of co-packaged optics (CPO) in AI data centers. Learn how silicon photonics, optical I/O, and high-speed optical interconnect technologies are shaping next-generation

Scaling AI Factories with Co-Packaged Optics for Better Power ...

In this blog, we'll explore how NVIDIA networking innovations have enabled co-packaged optics to deliver massive power efficiency and resiliency improvements for large-scale AI factories.

How Optical Interconnects Are Powering the Data Center

Explore the necessary shift to light-based signaling. Understand how optical interconnects fundamentally boost data center speed, capacity, and efficiency.

Data Center Interconnect Platform Market Forecast Report 2025-2032 ...

Enterprises pursuing digital transformation drive demand for robust data center interconnect platforms, focusing on secure, scalable connectivity. Key opportunities lie in integrating

AI data centers hit a new bottleneck: Optical interconnects

AI chip supply chain alert: optical interconnects & silicon photonics testing are key bottlenecks.

Optical Interconnects For AI Data Centers | Syntec Optics

Syntec Optics helps startups develop direct optical interconnects for GPUs to overcome bandwidth limitations in AI data centers.

Global Optical Chip Makers Accelerate Capacity Expansion as AI Data ...

The global optical chip industry is witnessing an unprecedented wave of capacity expansion, supply agreements, and strategic investments as demand for AI data center optical

Optical Interconnect Technology Analysis: LPO, NPO,

Exploring optical interconnects for AI data centers: LPO for low-power, short-distance links, NPO for high-density, near-package connections,

Optical Communication Industry Trends 2026: AI, 800G/1.6T Optical ...

Explore optical communication industry trends in 2026, driven by AI infrastructure, 800G and 1.6T optical modules, silicon photonics, and next-generation data center connectivity solutions.

Optical Interconnect in AI Data Centers Market

CANADA OPTICAL INTERCONNECTS IN AI DATA CENTER INDUSTRY GROWTH Canada is emerging as a key growth region in the optical interconnect market, driven by increasing

Ciena to Acquire Nubis for \$270M, Expands AI Data Center Interconnect ...

Ciena agreed to acquire New Jersey-based Nubis Communications in an all-cash deal valued at \$270 million. The move expands Ciena's inside-the-data-center strategy, adding ultra

CRU's data centre forecasting for optical fibre and cable is now live

Optical cable and DWDM options needed for higher speeds Single-mode fibre is the primary choice for connecting geographically dispersed data centres. These high-capacity links,

Kopin Unveils MicroLED Optical Interconnect Tech with

Kopin and Fabric.AI launch Neural I/O, a MicroLED optical interconnect backed by a \$15M order, aiming to deliver faster, low-power

OFC 2026: Arista Leads XPO MSA Launch for 12.8T AI

The landscape of global optical connectivity is witnessing a seismic shift. On the eve of the Optical Fiber Communication Conference (OFC 2026) in

Optical Interconnect Market Size, Outlook 2026 - 2031

The Optical Interconnect Market worth USD 18.83 billion in 2026 is growing at a CAGR of 12.06% to reach USD 33.28 billion by 2031. 3M Company, Sumitomo Electric Industries, Ltd., TE

Optical Data Center Interconnect

What is optical data center interconnect (DCI)? Optical Data Center Interconnect (DCI) refers to fiber optic transmission applications that interconnect data centers

Where co-packaged optics (CPO) technology stands in

Co-packaged optics (CPO) technology, a key enabler for next-generation data center architectures, promises unprecedented bandwidth density

All AI Data Center Interconnects Will Be Optical Within

Optical interconnect enabled the internet with transoceanic and transcontinental high-bandwidth optical fiber connections. Optical interconnect

Data Center Optical Interconnects for AI and

Learn how optical interconnects power AI-driven data centers with massive bandwidth, ultra-low latency, and sustainable scalability.

LightCounting :: Scale-up networks in AI Clusters is a new market for ...

LightCounting releases July 2025 Cloud Data Center Optics Report Investments by Cloud companies in data centers and supporting networking infrastructure have created a new and very dynamic

Are Photonic Components the Next AI Data Center Bottleneck? The Optical ...

Lumentum Reports \$808 Million in Q3 FY2026 Revenue, Up 90% Year-over-Year; Photonic Components Shift from Peripheral Parts to Core Bottleneck in AI Data Centers. Analyzing

OFC 2026: Semtech Advances the Future of AI Data Center Optical

Explore Semtech's innovations showcased at OFC 2026, highlighting the essential role of copper and optics in AI data center interconnect technology.

AI Data Center Interconnect 2026: CPO, Optical Interconnect and ...

Explore AI data center interconnect trends in 2026, including CPO, optical interconnect, OCS, and the real challenges slowing large-scale deployment.

Nokia touts massive TCO reduction with new line of coherent

With a new line of optical assets ranging from short-reach campus data center interconnect (DCI) to long-haul subsea transmission, Nokia is proposing a new development

Marvell completes \$3.25B acquisition of photonic startup Celestial AI

Fabless chip designer bets big on optical interconnects to boost data center capabilities February 02, 2026 By Ben Wodecki Have your say – Getty Images

AI Optical Interconnect Evolution: CPO, Silicon Photonics, and Data ...

It is gradually expanding to the entire data center interconnect architecture. From wide-area intelligent computing networks and high-speed optical interconnects to silicon photonics, CPO/NPO,

OFC 2026: AI Drives Optical Interconnect & CPO Shift

A report from OFC 2026 details the seismic shift to optical interconnects and co-packaged optics driven by AI inference demand,

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