



InformationWeek

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Sprint, Clearwire Reportedly In Talks About A WiMax Hook-Up

Financing issues are said to be behind the talks, although cell phone pioneer Craig McCaw's Clearwire floated a successful IPO earlier this year.

By W. David Gardner, [InformationWeek](#)

June 14, 2007

URL: <http://www.informationweek.com/story/showArticle.jhtml?articleID=199904478>

Sprint and Clearwire, two major players in the nascent WiMax market, have explored ways of potentially cooperating in an effort to speed up the deployment of the high-speed broadband technology, according to a report Thursday.

According to a *Wall Street Journal* story, the companies have discussed the possibility of creating a partnership or joint venture to push the rollout of WiMax. Sprint has been testing the service in Chicago and Washington while Clearwire is delivering WiMax service to 258,000 customers in several markets scattered around the United States.

Financing issues are said to be behind the talks. Although cell phone pioneer Craig McCaw's Clearwire floated a successful [IPO](#) earlier this year, Clearwire's stock has dropped in recent weeks. Sprint has been struggling to integrate Nextel's infrastructure in the wake of acquiring the cell phone provider. And on Wednesday, Sprint said \$312.5 million will be required for it to acquire affiliate [Northern PCS Services](#).

Although its specs are impressive -- wide area broadband wireless at real-world speeds of up to 45 Mbps per channel -- WiMax is still largely untested in major market conditions. Sprint is also rolling out high-speed 3G, so a partner like Clearwire could take some of the investment pressure off Sprint.

Clearwire has begun deploying WiMax in Ireland and Belgium, and its affiliates in Mexico and Denmark have been offering wireless high-speed Internet in those countries.

Earlier this week, start-up [Horizon Wi-Com](#) said its WiMax network technology is live in nine Northeast U.S. cities; that service, however, isn't yet available to paying customers.

A yellow advertisement for the BlackBerry 8703e. On the left is an image of the phone. The text reads: "the BlackBerry 8703e™ \$99.99* The lowest price ever." To the right, it says "ON THE NATION'S LARGEST MOBILE BROADBAND NETWORK." Below that is a "Shop now >" button and a note: "*after \$100 mail-in rebate". The Sprint logo is on the far right.

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