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Monday, Sep 29, 2008

## Technology - Wire

Posted on Mon, Sep. 29, 2008

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## Sprint begins mobile WiMax network in Baltimore

The Associated Press

Sprint Nextel Corp. opened its new wireless network to customers in Baltimore on Monday, offering Internet service for laptops for \$30 per month. It's the first commercial network in the U.S. to use so-called WiMax technology for mobile customers.

Compared to more mainstream cellular broadband technology, WiMax provides fast downloads and is cheap to deploy. Sprint is betting on the technology, championed by Intel Corp., to give it a few years' head start before cellular broadband catches up.

Sprint's network carries the "Xohm" brand (pronounced "zoam") and provides download speeds of 2 to 4 megabits per second, slightly more than twice as fast as the current cellular broadband networks of Sprint, Verizon Wireless, T-Mobile USA and AT&T Inc.

To use the network, customers need a \$60 laptop card an \$80, coffee-brewer-sized home modem. Sprint expects additional devices, like a USB modem and laptops with built-in WiMax modems, to become available this year.

With the home modem, Sprint will be competing not just with cellular broadband, but with fixed broadband services like DSL. It will charge \$25 per month for home access.

Sprint's launch of Xohm in Baltimore was widely expected, but it hadn't previously revealed pricing details.

Xohm service will be activated by users online, much like people sign up for Wi-Fi access at hotels. In addition to the monthly plans, Sprint will offer a day pass for \$10. No contracts are required.

The next cities to get Xohm will be Washington and Chicago, according to the Xohm Web site.

Sprint is spinning off Xohm into a joint venture with Clearwire Corp., which already has a WiMax-like network in parts of the country. That deal is expected to close before the end of the year. Google Inc., Intel and a group of cable companies are investing billions into the venture, which will carry Clearwire's name.

<http://www.xohm.com>

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