
WiMax - the Wireless Broadband Contender

Can't get broadband access using a cable modem or DSL? WiMax may be the answer to your prayers!

WiMax stands for Worldwide Interoperability for Microwave Access. Developed in concert with IEEE 802.11 standards (like the 802.11b or g wireless network you may have in your home), WiMax's or 802.16 (also known as Air Interface for Fixed Broadband Wireless Access Systems) promises wireless broadband access at 31 miles (in comparison to Wi-Fi's 300 feet!). WiMax was designed from the beginning for metropolitan-area networks offers data transfer rates up to 70Mbps supporting thousands of users.

WiMax technologies are also important in that they can use both licensed and unlicensed spectrum, have quality of service capabilities built in (for "special" applications like voice!) and include privacy and encryption features to secure transmission and provide user authentication.

WiMax equipment (for service providers and consumers), promises to be reasonably priced - and therefore a possible great fit for rural areas and smaller communities where DSL and cable modem services aren't available (or profitable) as well as for extending the range of current public Wi-Fi services (you won't have to sit inside Starbucks to download your email and surf the Web!). Intel has promised WiMax versions of its Centrino chip set for this year and Nokia is slated to have a WiMax enabled cell phone available in 2005.

A number of companies are currently in "test" or early implementation of public WiMax-based networks. 2005 should see a number of WiMax services and products "hit the market" - and perhaps - come to YOUR neighborhood!