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WIMAX 101

MANISH GUPTA, VP of Marketing and Alliances, Aperto Networks, clears the FUD that surrounds WiMax technology.

What is the advantage that WiMax provides over VSAT in remote connectivity?

The advantage is cost. A VSAT link requires a dish and includes the satellite cost, which is recurring because of the transponder's rent.

WiMax is a standard space technology that requires a CPE (Customer Premise Equipment) device or a WiMax modem (costing around \$150). PCMCIA cards or USB dongles that can help a user connect directly to a WiMax network are expected soon.

So will WiMax be able to replace WiFi inside a building?

If a laptop has WiFi and WiMax receivers, it will automatically be able to detect both the signals. The user can then select the best one.

However, WiFi is connected to a DSL or a fiber link, and that determines your connection speed. WiFi is fast from a laptop to the DSL modem. WiMax on the other hand can take you directly to the base station.



WIMAX PROS:
 Aperto's Gupta
 advocates WiMax for
 rural connectivity

What about the single hop connectivity advantage that a VSAT link can provide as opposed to multiple hops on WiMax?

This is a perfect example where the satellite and WiMax industries can work together. If there is a nationwide WiMax network, the VSAT link can provide connectivity up to the closest WiMax location. A synergy between the two technologies will help in terms of cost and long term management.

—AISHWARYA RAMANI