

How will Verizon's Open Cell Network affect your Wireless Service?

For those of us who like to pick our gadgets based on the needs of our lifestyle, instead of adjusting our lifestyle to the gadgets available in the marketplace, Verizon Wireless has recently announced a plan to assist with that desire. The nation's No. 2 wireless carrier has decided it will open its cell network to phones and other mobile devices purchased from independent vendors, such as Best Buy, Circuit City, or Wal-mart. This venture will give new and existing customers more options in software applications and wireless devices, not offered by Verizon Wireless for use on the Company's nationwide network. "Under Verizon's new policy, consumers will be able to go to virtually any electronics store and buy cell phones and other mobile devices for use on Verizon's network as long as the devices meet the carrier's minimum standards."¹

While the concept of open cell networks is new in the United States, the rest of the world has been offering its customers this option for years. As Verizon Wireless prepares to unveil its updated network later on this year, regulators and competitors are waiting to see what change, if any, this will have on America's wireless industry. More importantly, consumers are anxious to see how Verizon's open network will change their wireless phone service. Will Verizon Wireless' open network really give them the choice they are seeking? To answer that question we have to look at - **The Facts about Verizon Wireless Open Cell Network!**

Will I still be able to take my number with me when switching to another wireless carrier when Verizon Wireless implements its open network?

- Yes, the open network will not affect number portability. The Federal Communications Commission's rules state that as long as you remain in the same local area, you can switch service providers and keep your existing phone number.²

I'm thinking of switching from my wireless carrier to Verizon Wireless; will I be able to take my phone with me like I can take my number?

- Probably not. In the United States, wireless carriers utilize different technical systems. Verizon, along with Sprint, use CDMA technology while other companies use GSM. Phones that utilize the CDMA technology will not operate on GSM technology.³

Will I be able to keep my phone if I switch from Sprint, which uses the same technology, to Verizon Wireless?

- It is possible, but not 100% guaranteed the Sprint phones will work on Verizon Wireless' network. Although both companies run on the GSM network, you have to ensure your old phone meets Verizon Wireless' technology standards; if no it will not have the ability to run on the network.

¹ Searcey, D. and Sharma, A., "Verizon to Open Cell Network to Other's Phones", *The Wall Street Journal*, Marketplace, B1, November 28, 2007.

² Federal Communications Commission, <http://www.fcc.gov/cgb/NumberPortability/welcome.html#whatis>

³ Searcey, D., "Verizon's Opening Move and You". *The Wall Street Journal* Online, D1, November 28, 2007.

What plans does Verizon have to inform cell phone and mobile device manufacturers about standards necessary for their products to be utilized on the Verizon Wireless network?

- The Company has developed an Open Development Initiative designed to give customers wireless choices, and address opportunities to expand the wireless market.
- Additionally, Verizon Wireless is hosting an open Development Conference which will provide manufacturers with the Company's technical standards, so they can develop products that will perform on the new network.⁴

Are there any disadvantages to using other mobile devices on the open network?

- It is likely Verizon Wireless' customer service will not be able to troubleshoot these devices, so customers will have to deal directly with the individual equipment makers.⁵
- Consumers will probably have to pay more for devices purchased from electronic retailers because they may not be eligible to take advantage of discounts Verizon Wireless offers on its phones.
- In addition, the Company has not made a decision regarding the phone plans to be available to those who bring their own phones for use on the Verizon Wireless network. It is possible those who do not purchase their mobile devices from Verizon Wireless will have to pay more or may have different phone plan options.

How will this new network infrastructure benefit new and existing Verizon Wireless customers?

- As a result of the open network, customers will be able to take advantage of an increased amount of music, gaming, electronic books, and other software applications on the wireless market.
- Those who are looking to switch their wireless carrier to Verizon Wireless will have the choice of not only bringing their number with them, but also their phones.

⁴ Nelson, J (January 22, 2008). "Verizon Wireless to Host Open Development Conference March 19-20, 2008 in New York City". Press release. Retrieved on January 24, 2008.

⁵ See Note 2.