

DSL Prime: Free Nationwide Wireless

One company has applied to the FCC for 20 MHz of spectrum in return for providing 95 percent of U.S. customers free coverage (after CPE purchase).

by **Dave Burstein**

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"M2Z's goal is ... provide free high speed connections to 95 percent of U.S. consumers without any recurring fees. This is a grand undertaking."

—M2Z FCC request

Kleiner Perkins, history's most successful venture capital firm, is backing John Muleta and Milo Medin's offer to unwire the entire United States. 384/128 will be free while they'll sell higher speeds, ads, voice and much else. In return for 20 megahertz of spectrum, M2Z will pay a 5 percent royalty to the U.S. We give 19 megahertz to a TV network that mostly plays infomercials, so this is a no-brainer. "Affordable broadband for all Americans," anyone.

This very unconventional proposal makes so much sense Kevin Martin should find a way to say yes, after reviewing other proposals. Add another RFP: 10 megahertz in return for selling mobile telephony for \$15 a month and history will acclaim Martin as a great Chairman. After 1996, the world looked to the U.S. as a model; since around 2002, they've been laughing at us. This kind of innovation is what we (and many other countries) need.

I have perhaps the first interview with an AT&T/Microsoft IPTV customer below, far happier than the swirling rumors I've been hearing. He doesn't have HD, more than 6/1 DSL or TV from anyone other than SBC, but you can't have everything, can you. Half a million take telcoTV at PCCW in Hong Kong and hundreds of thousands at smaller U.S. carriers, so AT&T joining in is not really big news. Still AT&T is the Microsoft flagship and many will welcome the news it's working.

Loads more news breaking: Taiwan and New Zealand are promoting competition, Germany throttling it. BT is jumping into higher quality voice, cable rushing out 50 Mbps DOCSIS 2.0a, and more to come next issue.

It's good to be back.

M2Z: 384/128 free to 95 percent of America

Public safety makes this irresistible

Google and EarthLink are unwiring San Francisco at no charge, and now KP, the richest venture capitalists on Earth, are ready to fund a similar deal across the country. Besides the free consumer service, they are offering free carriage for police, fire, and emergency services, a potentially invaluable lifeline, as Katrina proved. In return, M2Z wants 20

megahertz of spectrum, 2155-2175 MHz. That band is essentially unused, with no plans announced to make it available for years.

Consumers would buy a transceiver, which M2Z would certify but not sell directly. They project a cost of \$250 at first for the consumer unit, dropping rapidly as vendors reach volume. For public safety, they are pairing with PacketHop for a more reliable mesh.

No details in the proposal on VoIP, but I assume you could just use Skype, AOL, Vonage, or a service from M2Z. The 20 megahertz is enough to add video in many areas as well, but that wasn't mentioned in the plan. M2Z intends to wholesale the 3 meg service through independent ISPs, revitalizing an industry that's dying.

Milo Medin built the @Home cable network, ready to serve millions at 10 Mbps. John Muleta was FCC Wireless Bureau Chief, so presumably knows how to work Washington. He was close to Robert Pepper, so don't be surprised to see Cisco involved. Kleiner Perkins' deals include Amazon, AOL, Compaq, Genentech, Netscape, Sun, and 20 percent of Google; they can afford the risk, and have added Charles River and Redpoint. Jeremy Pelofsky at Reuters broke the story.

Wireless is ready to play a major role, and not just in the U.S. I held over a provocative article considering Shelly Palmer's belief that DSL and cable will die in the wireless era, and am looking closely at Clearwire. Lots of potential and lots of issues. The M2Z filing is at <http://www.dslprime.com/a/M2Z.pdf>.

It has not escaped my notice that this deployment immediately suggests a profound issues for existing carriers, including mobile phones.