

Perspectives on the emerging wireless market

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Analyst:

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Featured coverage in this report:

2 Market Focus

- AT&T's de la Vega hints at end of unlimited data plans
- AT&T, Verizon widen data strategy with prepaid plans
- T-Mobile partnership is more rumor than reality

9 Video

- U.S. mobile video usage: teens watch more, adults less

11 Mobile Applications

- Business apps find more work with smartphone generation

13 Devices

- ereaders gain in popularity, but will make a good wireless read?

AT&T contemplates usage-based data pricing

Issue: At a recent financial analysts conference, AT&T Mobility CEO Ralph de la Vega hinted at major changes in AT&T's management of wireless data users, including 'incentives' to persuade high-consumption users to cut back as well as future usage-based plans.

Background: AT&T Mobility has been the poster child for the wireless data boom's downside, as its network continues to struggle under exponential data traffic growth. So it is not entirely surprising that the carrier is considering strategies to convince data hogs to back away from the trough by tying consumption to monthly bill amounts.

Implications: de la Vega's comments provide evidence that the days of unlimited data usage for cell phone and smartphone customers are fast coming an end, as carriers are forced to adopt policies that set limits — and assign usage-based data tiers — for wireless broadband customers.

ABOUT THE ANALYST



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Karen Brown has been tracking broadband communications technologies since 1999, when she joined *Cable World* magazine as associate technology editor. She has since monitored and reported on emerging technologies in the cable, Internet and wireless communications sectors for leading business publications including *Multichannel News*, *Wireless Week* and *CED Magazine*. She joined One Touch Intelligence in 2006.