

Open Patent Alliance Formed to Advance WiMAX 4G Technology

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To accelerate the widespread adoption and deployment of WiMAX technology and products, Alcatel-Lucent, Cisco, Clearwire, Intel Corporation, Samsung Electronics and Sprint today announced the formation of the Open Patent Alliance (OPA). The OPA will advance a competitive and open intellectual property rights model, thus stimulating a larger WiMAX industry that supports innovation through broader choice and lower equipment and service costs for WiMAX technology, devices and applications globally.

WiMAX is a 4G, IP-based broadband wireless technology that provides low-cost, multi-megabit speed and greater throughput for the mobile Internet era of video-rich content and bandwidth-intensive applications. It is based on the IEEE 802.16e standard.

To accomplish its goals, the OPA will form a WiMAX patent pool to help participating companies obtain access to patent licenses from patent owners at a predictable cost.

The patent pool will aggregate essential patent rights needed to implement the WiMAX standard as defined by the WiMAX Forum and the IEEE 802.16e standard. To help ensure product differentiation and interoperability at a more predictable cost, this approach will focus on providing a more competitive royalty structure by charging only for the features required to develop WiMAX products. The patent pool will incorporate a variety of royalty licensing solutions, including accounting for cross-licensing among individual members within the pool.

In addition to the formation of a WiMAX patent pool, the OPA will educate the WiMAX ecosystem about, and serve as a central resource for WiMAX intellectual property rights topics.

The OPA will issue a call for WiMAX essential patents for inclusion in its patent pool. An independent third-party reviewer will serve as the "patent referee" and will evaluate submitted patents to determine how essential they are to the WiMAX standard and WiMAX Forum profiles. While the OPA initially will focus its efforts on the WiMAX standard, it may work with other industry groups in the future.

Made up of six founding companies at its inception, the OPA expects to secure participation of an additional six to nine investor companies to encompass the WiMAX value-chain and broad geographic representation. Each investor company will have a seat on the OPA board of directors. The OPA will have dedicated staff that is directed by and accountable to the OPA board, and the alliance will serve as the licensing agent for the WiMAX patent pool, representing the licensors who agree to participate in the pool.

OPA Founded With Broad, Cross-Industry Support

"As an early and consistent supporter of the WiMAX 802.16e ecosystem, Alcatel-Lucent believes that end-user experiences will drive the broadband wireless revolution," said Philippe Keryer, president of Alcatel-Lucent's mobile access business. "We are confident that the formation of the Open Patent Alliance, which is fully in line with Alcatel-Lucent's Open CPE Program, will ensure that a broad and diverse set of devices will be available to the consumer, enabling service providers to deliver an unparalleled selection of applications and optimized device form-factors that can unleash the huge potential of broadband wireless anywhere, anytime, that WiMAX enables."

"Cisco supports the Open Patent Alliance and its charter to stimulate further adoption of WiMAX broadband wireless technologies and enhance the mobile experience around the world," said Brett Galloway, senior vice president of Cisco wireless and security. "By driving the adoption of WiMAX, innovative technologies will help enable people to move freely throughout the world while maintaining continuous connectivity to cool new applications and services."

"Clearwire fully supports the OPA as a vehicle that will ensure the rapid development of an open, worldwide WiMAX ecosystem," said Scott Richardson, chief strategy officer of Clearwire. "We are committed to innovation in all aspects of WiMAX technology, from the network infrastructure to end-user devices. Just as mobile phones now connect to people rather than places, Clearwire is giving our customers the ability to access the Internet, at true broadband speeds, when they are on the go."

"Intel's vision in driving the formation of the Open Patent Alliance is to bring the openness of the Internet and computing industries to the wireless industry and WiMAX" said Sriram Viswanathan, vice president, Intel Capital and general manager, Intel WiMAX program office. "By facilitating an open intellectual property rights model, we expect the alliance to in turn create a more competitive, innovative and broader WiMAX industry that ultimately benefits the consumer with more choice for WiMAX technology and services."

"Samsung Electronics is very proud to join the OPA with industry-leaders in WiMAX technology," said Hwan Chung, senior vice president of Samsung Telecommunications America. "We believe that this initiation can be a significant momentum to expand mobile WiMAX services. Thanks to a flexible and easily adoptable scheme for participants, we can accelerate the mobile WiMAX deployment and marketing so that people can enjoy the benefits of fast, revolutionarily new, and more cost-effective data communications."

"We expect to unleash wireless innovation with this patent alliance," said Barry West, president of Sprint's XOHM business unit. "The open licensing program will help prompt pervasive WiMAX technology. This speeds the day when consumers can enjoy the convenience of WiMAX mobile broadband services on new devices in new places, and experience all the open Internet has to offer."

Source: Intel

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