

AT&T to try selling wireless broadband laptops

April 1 2009, By PETER SVENSSON , AP Technology Writer

(AP) -- AT&T Inc. is going to go beyond cell phones and test selling laptops in its stores in Atlanta and Philadelphia.

The move, announced Wednesday at a trade show in Las Vegas, comes as the cell phone market is starting to saturate, and wireless carriers are looking for ways to expand into other gadgets.

Just as it does with cell phones, the phone company will subsidize the price of laptops when the customer signs a two-year contract. In Atlanta, customers will be able to buy a small "netbook"-type [laptop](#) for \$50 if they sign up for home and wireless [broadband](#) service plans totaling at least \$60 per month. That offer is being tested only in Atlanta - AT&T doesn't sell home broadband service in the Philadelphia area. For those signing up for wireless broadband only, the netbook costs \$100.

AT&T stores in both Atlanta and Philadelphia will be selling more expensive laptops as well, ranging up to a Lenovo X200 for \$850 when bought with wireless broadband. Lenovo Group Ltd. sells it for \$1,120.

Dallas-based AT&T started subsidizing netbooks sold at RadioShack Corp. stores late last year, bringing the price to \$100, down from \$500, for buyers who signed up for wireless broadband.

It isn't the first time Internet service providers have subsidized computers: Around 2000, many of them provided \$400 discounts for people who signed up for dial-up service. In Europe, it's already

common for phone companies to subsidize computers with wireless access.

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