

Verizon, Apple discussing iPhone

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Picture taken in 2008 in Paris shows a person using a iPhone. Verizon Communications Inc. and Apple are discussing the possible development of an iPhone for the US telecom giant to be introduced next year, USA Today reported on Monday.

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The newspaper, citing "people familiar with the situation," said Verizon entered into "high-level" discussions with Apple a few months ago when chief executive Steve Jobs was still running the day-to-day affairs of the company.

Jobs is on a leave of absence for health reasons until June but the discussions are continuing, USA Today said.

AT&T is currently the exclusive service provider for the iPhone in the United States, and The Wall Street Journal reported last week that it is seeking to extend the deal, which expires next year, until 2011.

USA Today noted that if [Apple](#) produces a version of the iPhone for Verizon it would be the first version of the hot-selling smartphone for a CDMA wireless network, which is different from AT&T's GSM technology.

Vodafone, co-owner of Verizon Wireless, sells the iPhone in Europe.

Roger Entner, head of telecom research for Nielsen, told USA Today that should Verizon succeed, it would be a big loss for AT&T.

"Breaking the ([iPhone](#)) exclusivity with AT&T is a huge thing," he said. "That would send shivers into AT&T's stock and senior leadership."

The biggest winners would be consumers, he added. "They could pick the network they wanted to use: AT&T's or Verizon's," Entner told USA Today. "It would finally give consumers choice, and choice is a good thing."

Verizon on Monday reported a net profit of 3.21 billion dollars in the first quarter of the year, up 5.3 percent from the same period last year.

With its purchase of Alltel in January, Verizon also became the largest US carrier with 86.6 million wireless customers at the end of the quarter ahead of AT&T's 78.2 million.

Revenue grew 11.6 percent in the quarter to 26.6 billion dollars.

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