

New tech extends range of AT&T U-Verse service

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(AP) -- AT&T Inc. said Thursday that it's deploying a new, but long-promised, technology to reach more homes with its U-Verse service, which provides cable TV and higher Internet speeds.

The Dallas-based phone company said it's deploying "pair bonding" - effectively sending the signal over two phone lines at once - to extend the reach of U-Verse another 1,000 to 2,000 feet from neighborhood nodes, starting Thursday.

The basic range of U-Verse varies widely with the quality of the [phone](#) lines, but has been averaging about 3,000 to 4,000 feet, according to customers.

AT&T isn't saying exactly how many additional homes now have access to U-Verse. The company says pair bonding will help take U-Verse from being accessible to about 24 million homes three months ago to 30 million at the end of 2011. The homes are within the 22-state area in which AT&T has local-phone coverage.

In 2007, AT&T said it would introduce pair bonding in 2008. It didn't explain the delay, but Randy Tomlin, senior vice president of field operations, said the company is now confident in the technology.

To make U-Verse accessible in an area, AT&T has to pull optical fiber into it and install boxes known as "VRADs." Pair bonding represents a cheap way to expand the availability of the service compared with

installing more VRADs.

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