

Verizon Wireless to start selling first 4G phone

March 15 2011, By PETER SVENSSON , AP Technology Writer

(AP) -- Verizon Wireless says it will start selling its first phone capable of using its new, faster "4G" data network.

The ThunderBolt from HTC Corp. will go on sale Thursday for \$250 with a two-year contract. It has a large, 4.3-inch [touch screen](#) and runs [Google](#) Inc.'s [Android](#) software.

Initially, Verizon will be selling it with an unlimited 4G data plan, but spokeswoman Brenda Raney says this option will probably go away later this year, along with the rest of Verizon's unlimited data plans.

Verizon launched its 4G network in December, based on a technology known as Long-Term Evolution, or LTE. But only laptop cards have been available for it. Verizon says customers can expect download speeds of 5 to 12 megabits per second, nearly ten times faster than 3G speeds.

Verizon's 4G network has limited coverage and doesn't carry phone calls, so the phone uses the 3G network as well.

Verizon has said it plans to sell 10 devices for the 4G network by this summer, including phones and tablet computers. Xoom tablets from Motorola Mobility Inc. are already on sale with 3G modems, but it will be possible to upgrade them with 4G modems later this year.

Sprint Nextel Corp. launched its first 4G phone, the [HTC](#) Evo 4G, last

summer. Its 4G network, run by subsidiary Clearwire Corp., is slower than Verizon's.

T-Mobile USA and AT&T Inc. don't have 4G networks under the common industry definition of the term, but call their 3G networks "4G" where they've been upgraded to higher speeds. They offer speeds similar to Sprint's 4G.

Verizon started to sell the iPhone last month in a 3G version. There's no word on a 4G version.

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Citation: Verizon Wireless to start selling first 4G phone (2011, March 15) retrieved 3 May 2024 from <https://phys.org/news/2011-03-verizon-wireless-4g.html>

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