

First 'white space' devices about to debut

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(PhysOrg.com) -- Google, and eight other already approved companies are likely to soon be joined by Microsoft as they all take a giant leap into the great "white space" unknown. Because bandwidth for computing devices has become ever more precious as more and more computing systems have sought to go wireless, companies such as Google and Microsoft have been furiously working on systems that could access portions of the spectrum traditionally reserved for television signals. Because such bandwidth is allocated and run by the FCC however, rules must be followed, such as only using bandwidth not already allocated to someone else, most notably, television stations.

Microsoft wants to position itself as not just a user of such bandwidth, but as an administrator of sorts and as such has been working on a [database system](#) through its research group dubbed, oddly enough, [SenseLess](#); a system that tracks every licensed television signal in the continental United States, and then combines that with topographical data to estimate where signals from existing licensed broadcasters dissipate.

Any holes that exist in any given area could conceivably be used for other purposes, such as [high speed Internet access](#) over much longer distances than can be achieved by WiFi or even cellular signals. If its bid is successful, Microsoft would achieve great influence in the soon to be, wide-open white-space market, as others that wish to use such bandwidth, would have to go through them.

If the industry, along with Microsoft, is successful in creating a system

for tracking and allocating such bandwidth and then in creating new devices to go along with it, users could expect to see devices capable of broadcasting and listening for signals over several miles, which could of course, change how many users get their Internet service.

Consider for example, the possibility of a WiFi receiver that could pick up wireless signals sent directly from an ISP, rather than having to be transported by cable or satellite to a home, then converted to such a signal and then back again; areas with little to no cable service currently, could instantly become high-speed Internet users, increasing the percentage of users nationwide with high speed access across the country.

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