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Verizon Lowers Cost, Technology Barriers to IoT Development

As many application developers will tell you, adding a thing to the Internet of Things, and then managing the data that thing collects, is not a simple task—nor is it necessarily an

affordable one. The process involves selecting chipsets and sensor modules, writing the required software, deciding which wireless communication technology to use, testing the devices, and determining how to bring the products and services to market.

“It’s no wonder so many people with great ideas for the IoT don’t make it through all these barriers and gates,” said Mike Lanman, Verizon’s senior VP of enterprise products, at a press conference this week, at which the company unveiled a new IoT platform known as ThingSpace.



Through the ThingSpace platform, the telecommunications firm hopes to make IoT product development and data collection simpler and more accessible to a wider range of end users than it has been in the past. The platform—which, according to Verizon, is designed for all kinds of end users, ranging from entrepreneurs to larger enterprises—offers 10 different development kits as well as access to a library of application programming interfaces (APIs) and an online community in which developers can get support and share information.

In addition to the platform, Verizon also announced the immediate availability of a cellular LTE modem, made by Sequans, which Verizon customers can purchase for half the cost of the modem’s market price (according to Fortune, this

will put the modem's price at \$15 apiece). Plus, starting in the first quarter of next year, Verizon will also halve the cost of current subscriptions to its 4G LTE network, through the launch of what Lanman dubbed a new "IoT core." This network is designed for IoT devices communicating a low payload of data, he said, citing smart meters or connected dog collars as examples.

At the event, Lanman noted that IoT developers are faced with hard choices involving connectivity. Oftentimes, developers link a device to a local area network (LAN) via a Wi-Fi, Bluetooth, ZigBee or ZWave interface. Connecting a device to a LAN is a lower-cost option than linking it directly to a cellular network, both because the cellular modems are expensive and because their use requires a service subscription. "But a wide area [cellular] network is really what a developer would most want... because it is reliable, has built-in security, and provides easy, bulk provisioning," he said.

Verizon has done well by providing connectivity to IoT devices that require a long read range, Lanman told attendees. In fact, he reported, Verizon's year-to-date revenue from its IoT and telematics solutions is \$495 million. But as new networks designed specifically for managing IoT devices—such as Sigfox, which just this week announced its first U.S. network—enter the market, cellular service providers need to remain competitive. That is at least partly why Verizon is lowering the cost of its modems and will start offering low-cost subscriptions for IoT devices.

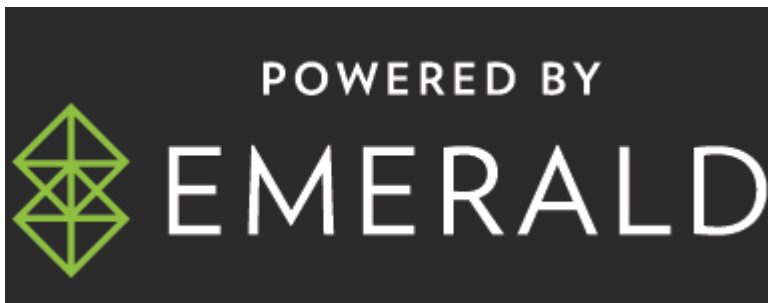


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