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Will the iPhone ever come to Verizon?

by [Marguerite Reardon](#)[Font size](#)[Print](#)[E-mail](#)[Share](#)[Yahoo! Buzz](#)

Rumors have circulated since Apple's [iPhone](#) was first launched that Verizon Wireless might get its own version of the popular device. But will the elusive iPhone ever come to Verizon's network?

Maybe. Verizon CEO Ivan Seidenberg hinted that Verizon might offer the iPhone on its 4G [wireless network](#), which the company plans to start building next year, in an interview with [Dow Jones and The Wall Street Journal](#). Specifically, Seidenberg said that if Verizon were to offer the iPhone, it would most likely be available on its 4G wireless network rather than on the current CDMA-based [cell phone](#) network.

Now, I know this isn't iron-clad confirmation, but it's something.

Seidenberg added that Apple never "seriously considered making a CDMA version of the iPhone because it didn't have as wide a distribution opportunity," the article said. But he explained that Verizon's new 4G network will [use a technology called LTE, or Long Term Evolution](#), which also happens to be the same technology that AT&T eventually plans to use for its 4G network.



(Credit: Apple)

While it may be true that Apple preferred working with AT&T because it uses GSM, a technology that most global cell phone companies use, there are also reports that Verizon [actually turned down the iPhone](#) because it wasn't willing to give up as much control as AT&T was. And these folks would argue, that this fact was the real reason that Apple struck the exclusive iPhone deal with AT&T instead of Verizon.

In any case, there is a lot of pent up demand for the iPhone among Verizon Wireless subscribers. I get e-mails all the time from readers asking me when I think Verizon might finally get the iPhone. Honestly, I have no inside information to know for sure when or if this will ever happen. But with talk that AT&T is [trying to extend the exclusivity deal with Apple](#) for the iPhone and the fact that Verizon's 4G network won't likely be ready for handheld devices until at least 2011, I'd say that anyone who is holding out to buy an iPhone in the hopes that Verizon might pick it up within the next two years, should stop waiting.

My advice is, just buy the current [iPhone 3G](#), sign up for AT&T's two-year contract and when your contract is up, maybe, just maybe, Verizon will have a 4G version of the phone. Of course, two years is a long time when it comes to technology. So by the time your iPhone contract is finished, there might be an even cooler, slicker device on the market that trumps the iPhone.

One thing is certain, Verizon says it wants to get a whole bunch of different devices on both its current 3G wireless network through its [Open Development Initiative](#) and on its new 4G broadband wireless network. These devices [include everything from Netbooks to remote medical monitoring devices](#) to smart grid sensors to electronic book and magazine readers.

On Friday the company released [initial technical specifications](#) for these new devices so that they can run on the company's soon-to-be-built 4G wireless network.

Verizon is also planning to host a Web conference for developers on May 1 to discuss details on the LTE specifications, answer questions, and gather feedback. Verizon said this is the next phase in the company's open development program.

Verizon announced the Open Development Initiative in 2007 and has designed the program to offer a "fast track" for companies making devices and applications for the

Verizon network. So far, the company says several devices have been certified, although today there are no commercial cell phones available that use Verizon's open network. Executives say this is because no device maker has come up with a business model to sell their open development devices and services.

Verizon [plans to begin testing its 4G wireless network this year](#). And it will start building the network in several markets next year. The network uses spectrum the company [acquired in the 700MHz spectrum auction](#), and the company is required to make a portion of whatever network it deploys using this spectrum open.



Marguerite Reardon has been a CNET News reporter since 2004, covering cell phone services, broadband, citywide Wi-Fi, the Net neutrality debate, as well as the ongoing consolidation of the phone companies. [E-mail Maggie](#).

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