

Cellular/PCS

AT&T SIGNS INTERNET DEAL

BUYPHONE.com signed an agreement for nationwide marketing and distribution of wireless services with AT&T Wireless Services Inc. BUYPHONE.com customers can shop, compare and buy wireless phones and service plans for any major city in the United States. The company also launched MessageME, a free messaging service where customers can send a text message to any wireless phone or pager through any wireless provider.

SPRINT AFFILIATE TO LAUNCH

Illinois PCS, an affiliate of Sprint PCS, will provide personal communications services under the Sprint PCS brand in central Illinois and the Quad Cities area. Scheduled for commercial service next month, the network will include Nortel Networks' code division multiple access Metro Cell base stations and DMS-100 switching equipment under a three-year, \$32 million agreement. "Our affiliates benefit from the strength of the Sprint brand while extending the reach of our network," said Tom Mateer, vice president of affiliates for Sprint PCS.

Intercepting E-mails That Matter

APEX's Wireless Service Allows User To Define Priorities

By Ed Lopez

In the world of e-mail, all messages are not created equal. Yet finding those diamonds in the dust can be time-consuming, particularly for users of wireless phones.

So wouldn't it be nice to have a notification by phone when a sales order has been confirmed, or when the boss or key customers send e-mail that requires immediate attention?

That's one of the notable features of a new wireless e-mail, or WEM, system that APEX Voice Communications has started to deploy in Latin America. Discussions with U.S. carriers are in the works.

The service is designed to help busy professionals connect with their most important messages, and it may assist carriers in

ly send e-mail. The subscriber can choose to receive notification of all incoming mail, just some mail or no notification at all. Subscribers also can restrict e-mail alerts to certain hours.

To receive notification of mail from specific addresses, the subscriber checks them off in the personal directory and decides whether he wants notification via short messaging service or a phone call that uses text-to-speech technology.

WEM fills a gap in available technology.

In both cases, the system gives instructions on how to retrieve the entire message by dialing a short number, such as *711. The system may be configured so that, in the notification call, the system reads the entire message.

A system like WEM serves several purposes in the wireless market. For carriers, it can be a way to stand out from the competition and to generate additional airtime. For users, it's a way to access and respond to e-mail from a wireless phone without having to buy a costlier phone with more features or wait for more advanced technology.

"It fills the gap between what is available now and what's going to be available in the future," said Fabio Tylin, regional manager for Florida, Latin America and the Caribbean at APEX.

Once notified of an incoming message, a subscriber using the WEM system has two options: record a reply that is converted into a WAVE (.wav) file and delivered as an attachment to the person who first e-mailed, or reply by telephone. The system scans the directory and presents options to call the person at work, home, a wireless phone or at another number.

When a subscriber wants to initiate an e-mail, the same recording process is used. If the recipient doesn't have a multimedia computer that can play

sound files, the subscriber can program a series of messages that will be delivered as text.

The idea for the WEM system came from wireless carrier Telemovil in El Salvador. When its monopoly ended with a new carrier in the market, Telemovil decided that it needed enhanced service applications to give customers an incentive to stay with the carrier. Telemovil, like other carriers in Latin America who also plan to use the system, doesn't charge customers to use the e-mail service.

However, the back-and-forth nature of alerts and replies builds up airtime that otherwise would not occur without the system. "Having these features motivates the subscribers to use them," Tylin said.

In addition to current WEM use in El Salvador, the system also will be deployed in Guatemala, Colombia, Bolivia and Brazil. Orders are even coming in from carriers in Asia. Tylin said the cost of an entry-level system is about \$60,000. Languages currently supported are Spanish, English, Portuguese and German. APEX can add other lan-

guages if needed.

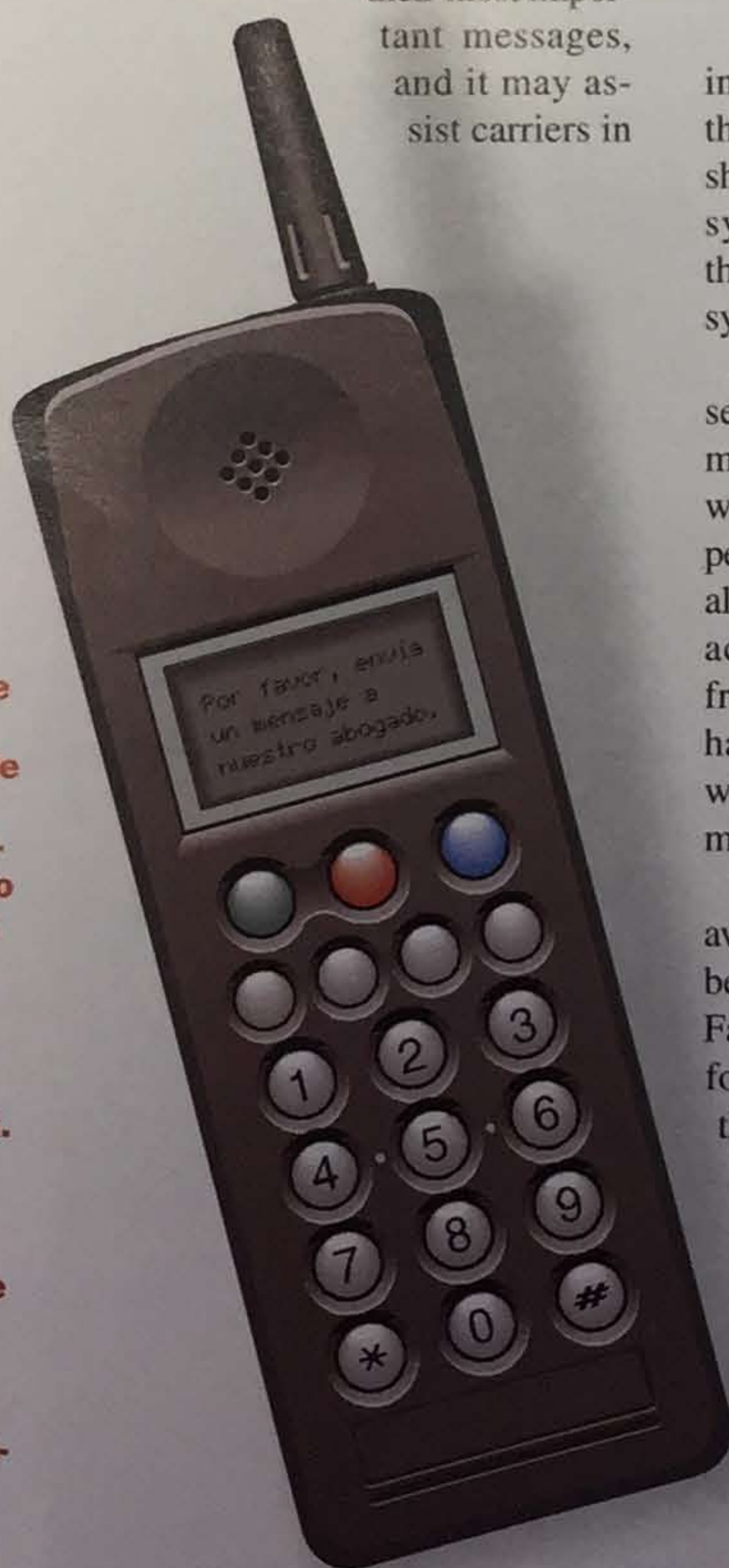
"It's been a door-opener for us," Tylin said. "We've been able to get into places where we weren't before."

Omnipoint To Offer GSM For PCS '99

Continuing a tradition begun last February at Wireless '99, Omnipoint Communications will supply a temporary global system for mobile communications network in New Orleans during next week during PCS '99. The city currently has no GSM carrier.

In cooperation with base station infrastructure provider Nortel Networks and the North American GSM Alliance LLC, Omnipoint will offer coverage in major Crescent City venues, including the Ernest N. Morial Convention Center, the French Quarter, the New Orleans International Airport and along Interstate 10.

The carrier obtained permission from bankrupt C-Block licensee Pocket Communications, which previously held the spectrum in New Orleans, for a limited period of time.



Price Per Minute In Major Cities

