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Bluetooth to work with Wi-Fi

By Yardena Arar , PC World , 02/12/2008

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A future version of [Bluetooth](#) will be able to increase throughput for sending videos, music, and other high-bandwidth applications by using a nearby Wi-Fi network, the group in charge of Bluetooth development says.

Ander Edlund, European Marketing Director for the Bluetooth Special Interest Group, said the technology enabling Bluetooth connections to hop on neighboring Wi-Fi networks is about a year from being ready. "We're on [Bluetooth version] 2.1 now, so it might be in version 3," Edlund said on the eve of Mobile World Congress, which opened its a four-day run Monday.

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The technology that will enable Bluetooth to use Wi-Fi is called "Alternate MAC/PHY."

Bluetooth was designed as way to wirelessly connect devices--a PC and a printer, for example--that doesn't consume as much power as Wi-Fi, but also doesn't move data as quickly or as far.

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Bluetooth developers are already working to make their technology compliant with another wireless broadband standard, the [WiMedia Alliance's Certified Wireless USB ultra-wideband technology](#).

However Certified Wireless USB products have only begun to appear recently (see our [review of IOGear's Wireless USB Hub/Adapter](#)), and so Bluetooth is turning to a more ubiquitous high-speed wireless technology to help with applications where Bluetooth's own bandwidth (with a

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theoretical maximum of 3 megabits per second) is insufficient. The Bluetooth SIG stressed that it is continuing to work on pairing Bluetooth with Certified Wireless USB, however.

Alternate MAC/PHY would let a Bluetooth connection use an 802.11x network only when the additional bandwidth was needed; for tasks that can make do with standard Bluetooth speeds, the Bluetooth connection would stop using the Wi-Fi network.

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