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Wireless Internet access: 3G vs. WiFi? â˜†

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Abstract

This article compares and contrasts two technologies for delivering broadband wireless Internet access services: â€œ3Gâ€ vs. â€œWiFiâ€. The former, 3G, refers to the collection of third-generation mobile technologies that are designed to allow mobile operators to offer integrated data and voice services over mobile networks. The latter, WiFi, refers to the 802.11b wireless Ethernet standard that was designed to support wireless LANs. Although the two technologies reflect fundamentally different service, industry, and architectural design goals, origins, and philosophies, each has recently attracted a lot of attention as candidates for the dominant platform for providing broadband wireless access to the Internet. It remains an open question as to the extent to which these two technologies are in competition or, perhaps, may be complementary. If they are viewed as in competition, then the triumph of one at the expense of the other would be likely to have profound implications for the evolution of the wireless Internet and structure of the service-provider industry.

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Keywords

Internet; Broadband; Wireless; 3G; WLAN; Ethernet; Access; Spectrum; Economics; Industry structure

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