# Internet of Things network to launch in UK next year

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Credit: Wikipedia

(Phys.org) —Mainstream talk about the Internet of Things continues unabated, as more people become familiar with the concept of having connected devices in their homes and the communities. The talk is about smart devices connected to the Internet and to each other, from meters to washing machines to fitness-tracking wearables, to kitchen devices, to far more gadgets that go "on" and "off." Depending on which analysts you talk to, forecasts range from estimates of seeing 25 billion to 50 billion connected devices worldwide by 2020, but IoT pundits also point to the challenges ahead in cost and energy use.

Addressing that challenge, UK-based communications company Arqiva announced plans on May 16 to build and run a national low-power, battery-preserving network to connect smart devices in 10 UK cities next year, in support of the Internet of Things. This will be a UK rollout starting with Birmingham, Bristol, Edinburgh, Glasgow, Leeds, Leicester, Liverpool, London, Manchester, and Sheffield. The network will use the SIGFOX 'ultra-narrowband' technology, with its key advantages of being suited to connect objects over long distances where a long battery life and low cost are needed.

"Ultra-narrowband technology allows you to transmit very small amounts of data rather than big video files or anything like that. So it radically expands the number of things you can connect," said Wendy McMillan, managing director of smart metering and machine-to-machine solutions at Arqiva. "You can also have a battery life that is 15-20 years long, so you don't have to worry about having power to all the connected devices that you put out there, which is obviously a real problem with some of the mobile technologies which don't have such long battery life." Simply put, the low-power consumption allows batteries and equipment to last longer, avoiding the cost and inconvenience of replacing devices.

"This massively expands the range of devices that can be connected, increasing the benefits to consumers and businesses alike," McMillan

said. The Arqiva network will become part of the SIGFOX global Internet of Things network; SIGFOX networks are deployed in France, the Netherlands, Spain, and in cities including Moscow and Munich.

Headquartered in Toulouse, France, SIGFOX has "ultra-narrowband-based radio technology" which enables long-range two-way wireless Internet connections for devices. SIGFOX, by providing low-throughput communication and extending the battery and service life of connected devices, promotes its network advantages of eliminating cost and energy-use barriers to the implementation of IoT and M2M (machine-to-machine) solutions.

Commenting on the announcement, Rodolphe Baronnet-Frugès, vice president of network and business development at SIGFOX, said that "our partnership with Arqiva is a significant part of SIGFOX's plan to establish a global cellular network dedicated to the IoT."

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