

SpaceX, T-Mobile try to connect remote areas with satellites

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In this May 29, 2014, file photo, Elon Musk, CEO and CTO of SpaceX, introduces the SpaceX Dragon V2 spaceship at the SpaceX headquarters in Hawthorne, Calif. Musk's SpaceX and T-Mobile are teaming up to help provide voice and data services anywhere by having satellites connect with cellphones using T-Mobile's wireless spectrum. The plan, called Coverage Above and Beyond, looks to use SpaceX's Starlink satellites that are in low Earth orbit and T-Mobile's wireless network to reach people even in remote areas of the U.S. that typically don't receive traditional cell signals. Credit: AP Photo/Jae C. Hong, File

Elon Musk's SpaceX and T-Mobile are teaming up in an attempt to connect mobile devices through a network of satellites, providing coverage to even the most isolated places.

Under the plan, T-Mobile's wireless network would be routed through SpaceX Starlink satellites that are in low Earth orbit.

T-Mobile said that the vast majority of smartphones already on its network will be compatible with the new service using the device's existing radio.

The companies are looking to provide text coverage, including SMS, MMS and participating messaging apps, nearly everywhere in the continental U.S., Hawaii, parts of Alaska, Puerto Rico and territorial waters starting with a beta in select areas by the end of next year. They want to add voice and data coverage at a later time.

T-Mobile and SpaceX say they are ready to partner with other carriers to help expand the service worldwide.

"The important thing about this is that it means there's no dead zones anywhere in the world for your cellphone," Elon Musk said during a live event at a SpaceX facility in Texas on Thursday.

The billionaire and Tesla CEO who is engaged in a legal battle with Twitter, emphasized that one of the key benefits of the service will be that it can help people who are in life threatening situations in remote areas, potentially saving lives.

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