

T-Mobile, SpaceX team up for satellite texting service

Article

The news: T-Mobile opened registration to its customers for a free beta test of its satellite text-messaging service in partnership with SpaceX's Starlink. A commercial rollout is expected in 2025.

T-Mobile stated that 300 Starlink low-Earth orbit satellites will cover service for 500,000 square miles of land in the US that isn't reachable by cell towers, per [Ars Technica](#). SpaceX has

a spectrum lease agreement with T-Mobile that covers all 50 states and Puerto Rico.

Why it's worth watching: Starlink and T-Mobile have been [testing their satellite connectivity](#) since earlier this year.

- **The most significant challenge for SpaceX was maintaining a stable connection** due to the satellites' 17,000 mph orbit around Earth.
- SpaceX designed a system for seamless signal handoffs, mirroring the efficiency of terrestrial cell towers.

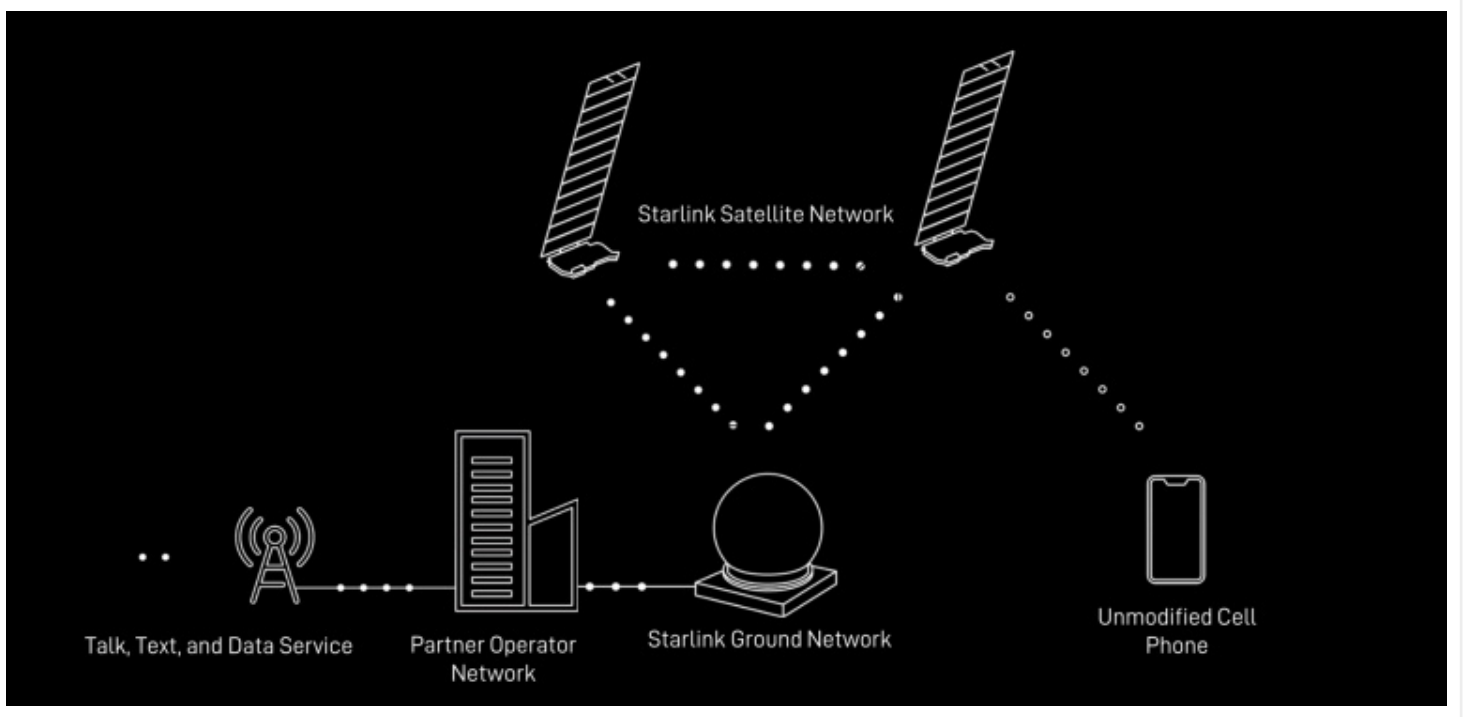
iPhone 14 and newer models have satellite texting through [partnerships with Globalstar and SpaceX](#). Although Apple markets it as an SOS feature for emergencies such as being lost outside of network range.

Satellite texting for a price: While the iPhone 14 and later models have a custom antenna that can connect to satellites, T-Mobile's service "is expected to work with most modern mobile phones, but could work best with select smartphones," T-Mobile said.

T-Mobile is also expected to offer satellite calling and data services "coming in the future," a **move that could compel upgrades to existing smartphone plans and entice subscribers of competing networks.**

Our take: For network providers looking to expand service as 5G buildouts slow down, adding satellite connectivity could drive subscriptions and retain users shopping around for better phone and data plans.

The market remains untested for long-term revenue potential from satellite-based connectivity services.



(Source: Starlink)

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