

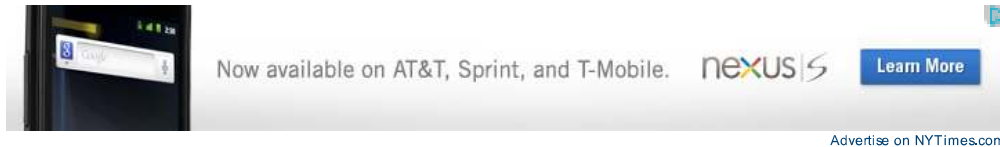
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AT&T Links With Smart Grid Player Digi

By KATIE FEHRENBACHER of
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The [undercover smart grid player Digi International](#) is about to get a lot less undercover. On Wednesday, telco giant AT&T [said it has partnered](#) with Digi to offer home and building energy applications for the 13 million smart meters that connect to AT&T's wireless network.

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Digi has been a player in industrial machine-to-machine (M2M) networking for over two decades, selling modems, communications modules and gateways to companies in the industrial, transportation and health care fields. More recently Digi has gotten some traction in the smart grid industry, largely as a provider of ZigBee-based network gateways for in-home energy management systems, allowing in-home devices to connect with smart meters or broadband systems that can then connect back to third-party management systems or utility control rooms.

Connecting smart meters to home devices is where Digi will help out its new partner AT&T, too. Digi and AT&T will be offering a way for home and building owners to connect a smart thermostat to a smart meter and remotely control the thermostat using a mobile app and a Digi gateway. Using Digi's smart plugs, home and building owners can also monitor and manage individual appliances.

The combination of the Digi gateways and connected plugs and AT&T's wireless network can also enable utilities to turn down appliances, such as a pool heater, remotely when needed. Digi calls this its load control feature.

Telco smart grid

AT&T's smart grid strategy has been to turn to smaller companies for partnerships like the one with Digi. [Previously AT&T has also worked with SmartSynch.](#)

Within the home, AT&T has even made an acquisition in the home automation and home energy space. Last year it acquired [Xanboo](#), a decade-old firm that was one of the original home automation players and that enables home owners to monitor security, energy consumption and digital media across devices.

But mostly AT&T is looking to find more and more machine-to-machine applications — like smart meters or connected smart grid devices — for its wireless network. Connected machines are an upcoming area of growth for phone companies, given that cell phone subscribers have plateaued in the U.S.

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