Amazon cell service? Company reportedly interested in buying Boost Mobile

The Amazon Fire Phone!
Andrew Cunningham

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You buy everything else from Amazon, so why not cellular service? A report from Reuters claims the retail juggernaut is "considering" buying Sprint MVNO Boost Mobile.

Sprint and T-Mobile are currently in the process of a big merger, and one of the concessions required by the FCC is the divestiture of Boost mobile, Sprint's low-cost, prepaid carrier. With Boost up for sale (for up to $3 billion, according, again, to Reuters), Amazon is evidently considering jumping into the cellular business.

As an MVNO (Mobile Virtual Network Operator), Boost Mobile doesn't own its own network. Instead, it resells Sprint's network, so in the future it would still rely on the merged T-Mobile/Sprint network for service. Buying Boost would reportedly score Amazon a sizable (7-8 million strong) customer base, along with a six-year license to operate on and resell service to the new T-Mobile/Sprint network. Amazon might want to take things even further than a simple MVNO operation, though, as the report says Amazon would also be interested in any wireless spectrum that the merged companies

would need to sell off.

Amazon has been circling the cellular industry for some time. The company builds the “Fire OS” Android fork, which regularly appears on dirt-cheap Kindle Fire tablets produced by the company. It even made a smartphone once, called the Amazon Fire Phone, although it was an incredible flop. Since then, the company has taken to selling “Prime Exclusive” Android phones, which come pre-loaded with Amazon apps.

You might ask, “Why would Amazon want to be a cell carrier?”—but Amazon likes to builds\ and sell just about everything. The company started as “the world’s largest book store,” but today it builds tablets, e-readers, set-top boxes, smart speakers, smart displays, and voice assistants. There’s the Prime Video Netflix competitor, Amazon Drive cloud storage, Twitch.tv video game streaming, Whole Foods, Amazon Web Services, delivery drones, digital music and book sales, retail stores, plans for satellite Internet, and a million other things. For now, cellular service is one of the few things Amazon doesn’t sell.

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