RedCap, the 5G for wearables and IoT, will get its first devices soon

Both T-Mobile and AT&T have plans to release their first devices soon that run on RedCap, a 5G specification that is tooled for Internet of Things devices, according to *Fierce Wireless*.

What is RedCap? Great question! Also called “reduced capability” or NR-Light, RedCap is a low-bandwidth version of 5G that’s expected to make certain devices, like wearables, sensors, or surveillance cameras simpler and more power efficient, according to an Oracle document. That could mean cheaper cellular-connected smartwatches, XR glasses, or other portable products that don’t need high-powered antennas and fast throughput last longer on a charge.

AT&T, which began testing the spec on its own network early this year, reportedly plans to release its first NR-Light devices in 2025, *Fierce Wireless* writes. T-Mobile will launch one of its own before this year is out.

It’s not clear what those devices will be, but AT&T AVP of device architecture Jason Silkes has hinted at what early NR-Light products could look like, telling *Fierce* in June that the first RedCap devices will probably be cheap mobile hotspots and dongles. Indeed, TCL announced a 5G USB dongle last week, catchily named the TCL Linkport IK511.

Early products could use a modem chipset Qualcomm launched last year called the Snapdragon X35. It listed several companies in its announcement, including T-Mobile and AT&T,

that plan to use the modem in future products. Perhaps we'll hear more during CES early next year. Let the (slow) race to 5G begin.

https://www.theverge.com/2024/10/13/24269370/at-t-t-mobile-redcap-5g-explained-iot-devices-coming-soon