

## GPS and Broadband: At Odds?

**Rita Foley:**

Global positioning technology, GPS, is everywhere these days. It's in smartphones, cars, farm equipment; even some planes are relying on GPS instead of radar for navigation.

**Chris Dancy:**

The future, the entire future of air-t air transport in this country is predicated on accurate GPS signals.

**Rita Foley:**

But a new cellular network in the works could knock many of those GPS devices offline.

**Voice-over:**

Ignition start. We have liftoff of an ILS proton rocket.

**Rita Foley:**

The problem grows out of a recent decision by federal regulators to let a satellite company called Lightsquared build a high-speed wireless network. Until now, GPS receivers haven't had much trouble filtering out noise from those satellites. But a network of cell towers will amplify Lightsquared's frequencies and overpower the signals that GPS devices home in on.

**Chris Dancy:**

The Lightsquared proposal puts forty thousand antennas all across the country, um, transmitting on frequencies adjacent to the frequencies used by the GPS satellites and transmitting at up to a billion times more power.

**Rita Foley:**

Public-safety officials are also worried because they rely on GPS to track and dispatch police cars, fire trucks, ambulances, and other emergency vehicles. The FCC is requiring Lightsquared, GPS manufacturers, and users to participate in a technical working group to study the issue and to develop a solution if it finds actual interference.

**Jim Kirkland:**

Well, unfortunately, based on the available evidence we don't really see a solution to the, uh, problem of interference. I mean it is just such a severe, uh, problem in terms of the difference in power that as we sit here today, we do not see a technical solution.

**Rita Foley:**

Future GPS devices can attempt to address the technical hurdles with filters, but Dancy says the existing GPS infrastructure is the issue.

**Chris Dancy:**

Um, our concern, if that ends up being the solution, is we do not believe that people who bought FAA-certified equipment should be required to pay the cost of making the Lightsquared system compatible with the GPS system.

**Rita Foley:**

Jeffrey Carlisle, a former FCC official who now serves as Lightsquared's executive vice president, says his company hopes to resolve ongoing concerns and make sure there is a robust GPS system. The FCC will likely hold him to his word.

**Rita Foley:**

Rita Foley, The Associated Press.

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