

**U.S. WiFi Offload
Traffic Forecast, 2011
– 2016: *Relief for
Mobile Data
Networks?***

Market Study
Third Quarter, 2012





U.S. WiFi Offload Traffic Forecast, 2011 – 2016: *Relief for Mobile Data Networks?*

A Market Study

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Abstract

Once the red-headed stepchild of cellular data networks, WiFi has emerged as a legitimate “other network” option for mobile operators. Granted, subscribers have to be within about 300 feet of a WiFi hotspot, or within a metro WiFi hotzone, but carriers are looking hard at WiFi Offload as a way to not only provide their customers with high-quality, reliable wireless data, but also to relieve some of the congestion on their 3G mobile data networks.

This report forecasts the amount of data traffic offloaded from 3G/4G mobile broadband networks to WiFi in the following two categories of WiFi usage:

- **WiFi Offload:** Traffic that would flow over 3G/4G, but instead goes over WiFi (by end user and/or carrier selection). This is WiFi that is used when the user is not at home, work or school (public / private).
- **WiFi Only:** Connections that are WiFi only. These are devices (tablets, laptops, ereaders, handheld gaming consoles, etc.) that do not have a 3G/4G modem and can therefore only connect over WiFi. If it's a smartphone using WiFi, then it is WiFi offload. If it is a LTE-enabled tablet using WiFi, then it's WiFi offload. If it's a tablet with only WiFi, then it falls into the WiFi only category. Again, this category only deals with the use of WiFi outside the home, but not at school or at work.

Key questions addressed:

- What is WiFi?
- Where is the WiFi standard headed?
- How is WiFi used?
- What is WiFi offload?
- What is the difference between user-driven WiFi offload and carrier-driven WiFi offload?
- What are some of the key standards efforts associated with WiFi offload?
- What the potential benefits associated with WiFi offload?
- What are the potential issues associated with WiFi offload?
- What is WiFi only? How is it commonly used?
- How much WiFi offload traffic is expected through 2016?

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- How much WiFi only traffic is expected through 2016?
- How do the two different types of WiFi data traffic inter-relate?

Who should read this report?

- Mobile operators, including those with WiFi networks
- Device OEMs
- Content providers and distributors
- Cable MSOs and those offering WiFi services
- Financial analysts and investors.

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