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[Sandbridge Technologies' Holy Grail cell phone chip gets software partners](#)

[Dean Takahashi](#) | December 11th, 2008



[Sandbridge Technologies](#) has made a big bet on creating power-efficient chips that are flexible enough to handle a lot of different cell phone signals, including next-generation wireless technologies. Today, it's announcing it has lined up cell phone software developers to help it offer complete solutions for its customers.

[The Tarrytown, N.Y.-based company has designed a baseband processor for a cell phone that some view as a Holy Grail of wireless computing.](#) This chip can be reprogrammed on the fly to handle almost any signal, whether it's a WiMax or Long Term Evolution (LTE) next-generation network call, a CDMA call on an older U.S. network, or a GSM call in Europe. In other words, using these chips, it would be easy to create a powerful cell phone with high-speed data that works anywhere in the world.



This should make things interesting for Sandbridge's competitors such as Qualcomm. With the Sandbridge chip, just about every phone could have fully functional broadcast TV video and internet speeds that should be much faster than home computers (assuming the phone's network has the right infrastructure built). But the software that makes 4G wireless (WiMax and LTE) work is critical. The chips have to be easily programmable. That is, if only the biggest companies can afford to design software and phones around the chips, then they aren't as useful to the broader market. But by adding these software partners, Sandbridge is making sure that the chips can be broadly adopted.

It has signed agreements with 4G software developers [MimoOn](#) of Germany and [4M Wireless](#) of

England for LTE software. And it has also signed up [SeaSolve](#) of San Jose, Calif., to make software for mobile WiMax phones.

Sandbridge was founded in 2001 and currently has about 49 people on staff. It raised \$60 million in three rounds from Tallwood Venture Capital, Summerhill Venture Partners, and Doughty Hanson. The company's engineers figured out clever tricks to create what they call a "responsive processor," or one that can be interrupted in midstream. The processor has many active elements, but it isn't a nightmare to program like other complex chips.

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