

## Personal Communications via Present and Future Satellite Systems

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Personal communications satellite systems are designed to provide narrowband voice service directly to a handheld transceiver no larger than a cellular phone. For the past 5 years, extensive studies have been undertaken by industry to determine whether operation into a handheld terminal can be achieved more successfully via communications satellites in low earth orbit (LEO), intermediate circular orbit (ICO), or the more conventional geostationary orbit (GEO). Systems based on these three orbit types have been proposed and are in various stages of construction, with initial deployments scheduled during the years 1998 to 2000. This paper gives an overview of proposed personal satellite communications systems, describes their current status, and offers a perspective on how these systems might evolve in the marketplace in the post-2000 time frame.

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