

PulseLink to license UWB technology

By David Manners

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PulseLink, the Kuwaiti-backed wireless start-up that can run ultra wide-band (UWB) signals over coaxial cable, powerlines or wirelessly, is preparing to license its technology while the UWB chipset market takes time to develop.

"We're prepared to license all our technology," said Bruce Watkins, co-founder, president and COO of PulseLink. "We may be first to market, and establish a lead [PulseLink's first silicon chipset is due out this quarter] but, in the end, you have to be part of a market with competitors.

"We have to enable the competition. We don't need to own it all. We'd be happy with five per cent of the market. Five per cent will make us a Wall Street darling."

Watkins acknowledged that "a number of gating factors" were postponing take-off in the UWB market. He pointed to the need to establish

protocols and standards and to the two to three years it will take to see 40Gbit/s in portable devices.

"There's a grand future for UWB but those taking on the market need to find ways to make money before all these things get here," said Watkins.

Joe Adams, v-p for business development at SkyWorks Solutions, agreed with Watkins, adding: "There are only a few places where people will make money. VCs will be expecting revenues from trade sales to large companies rather than IPOs."

Agreeing with Adams, Richard Clemmer, CEO of Agere Systems, believes start-ups would be attractive to large firms in this sector. Watkins responded: "We didn't found this company to sell it."

PulseLink has raised \$47m in venture capital, all from Kuwaiti backers. Its first chipset, due out by the end of this month, will be manufactured in two foundries. The RF chip is being made by Jazz Semiconductor, the baseband by TSMC.