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A Simple, Compact System for Opening Up the Dead Zones That Block Cellphone Signals

By JOHN BIGGS

Cellphone carriers often crow about having fewer dropped calls than the competition, but high-rises, brick walls and plaster lead to blind spots in some homes. Wi-Ex has created a compact system for amplifying cellphone signals without the need for much high-tech mumbo-jumbo.



The zBoost Dual-Band grabs cell signals and strengthens them inside homes and businesses, often bumping up the signal display on a phone by two or three bars. The system supports G.S.M. and C.D.M.A. phones, so it works with all systems except some Nextel phones. It is available online at www.wi-ex.com and other sites for less than \$400.

Installation is fairly simple, and unless you have experience in radio engineering there is little need to tweak things. The system comes with a large outdoor antenna and a long cable. You mount the antenna to an outside wall or just stick it out a window. Then you move the receiver to your low-signal zone and plug it in.

In a test in a basement that has traditionally been a dead zone, reception improved from one or two bars to a full four bars. Cave dwellers now have one less excuse for being antisocial.