NASA, M2MI work on satellite development

The U.S. space agency says it and the Machine to Machine Corp. have signed an agreement to make "nanosats" to improve space telecommunications.

The National Aeronautics and Space Administration's Ames Research Center and the company signed a cooperative research and development agreement -- only the third in NASA's history -- to develop very small satellites called nanosats for the commercialization of space.

Nanosats are satellites weighing 11-110 pounds. A large number of those satellites, called a constellation, will be placed in low Earth orbit for the new telecommunications and networking system.

"The constellation will provide a robust, global, space-based, high-speed network for communication, data storage and Earth observations," said company Chief Executive Officer Geoff Brown.

Under the agreement, NASA and M2MI will develop a fifth-generation telecommunications and networking system for Internet protocol-based and related services. NASA said the cooperative effort will combine its expertise in nanosensors, wireless networks and nanosatellite technologies with M2MI's capabilities in software technology, sensors and commercialization capabilities to create an integrated machine-to-machine intelligence layer for seamless information exchange and use.