

RCR Wireless News

Sites offer software to unlock iPhone

A test of the DMCA exemptions, or AT&T's patience?

By Phil Carson

Story posted: September 12, 2007 - 1:36 pm EDT

_____ In a digital netherworld in which Internet-based blog sites begin to look like the most legitimate aspect of the terrain, word
Advertisement has spread that two iPhone unlocking procedures are making the rounds.

_____ The first—iPhoneSimFree—is “proprietary” and costs a curious \$99 at iPhone “resellers.” The second—iUnlock—is “open
source” and being offered at no charge. Unlocking the iPhone would allow users to access service from any GSM operator
in the United States and various international markets.

The news comes on the heels of Apple's announcement that it had cut the price of the iPhone 8 GB model from \$600 to \$400 and met its goal of selling one million iPhones by the end of September. Apple also is preparing to finalize or announce deals to launch the device with European carriers.

Neither an Apple or AT&T Mobility spokesperson was immediately available for comment.

The news of unlocking procedures on offer may pose a test to see how AT&T Mobility and Apple handle individuals or companies that unlock the phone for a fee or even distribute free procedures for doing so. AT&T Mobility has a five-year, exclusive agreement to distribute the device in the United States.

Apparently, there are no legitimate “resellers” of the iPhone beyond individuals off-loading their personal device.

According to attorney James Baldinger of Carlton Fields, who represents prepaid wireless provider TracFone Wireless Inc. in pursuing individuals or companies that unlock and resell handsets for profit, an individual who unlocks their locked phone for their own use is protected by exemptions to the federal Digital Millenium Copyright Act. Those who do so for profit may well be committing a crime, Baldinger said. But whether AT&T Mobility and Apple will pursue the matter is open to question, Baldinger said, because any gains made in such a pursuit might also create a public relations backlash.

The authors of the latest unlocking procedure apparently operate under arms-length Web monikers. The procedures, free and for a fee, appear on Web sites including:

--www.iPhoneunlockingtools.com

--www.iPhoneSimFree.com

--www.Gizmodo.com

And, possibly, other sites.

PRINTED FROM: <http://www.rcrnews.com/apps/pbcs.dll/article?AID=/20070912/FREE/70912005/1015&template=printart>

Entire contents © 2007 Crain Communications, Inc.