


July 6, 2007

DOW JONES REPRINTS

 This copy is for your personal, non-commercial use only. To order presentation-ready copies for distribution to your colleagues, clients or customers, use the Order Reprints tool at the bottom of any article or visit: www.djreprints.com.

- [See a sample reprint in PDF format.](#)
- [Order a reprint of this article now.](#)

Hackers Bypass iPhone Limits

By LI YUAN

July 6, 2007; Page B4

Less than one week after the much-ballyhooed release of **Apple Inc.**'s iPhone, hackers have figured out ways to override some of the restrictions imposed by Apple and **AT&T Inc.**, the device's exclusive service provider.

But while the hacks are getting high visibility on the Web, their use likely will be limited to the most tech-savvy iPhone owners. Most customers probably will decide the hacks are too complicated or not worth the trouble. Also, Apple is skilled at battling hackers and is likely to figure out ways to overcome the overrides.

The most popular hack so far is targeted at the requirement that all iPhone users sign a wireless-service contract with AT&T. Without it, none of the device's features are supposed to work, including its Web browser and iPod music player.

Old Friend

Several hackers have posted on the Web step-by-step instructions on how to activate the iPhone's Web browser and iPod without signing up for an AT&T contract. One of the hackers is Jon Lech Johansen, a Norwegian software expert who infuriated Hollywood by creating a program that allowed customers to copy DVDs onto their computers. He has also worked on ways to alter the iTunes software so songs could be downloaded to devices other than iPods.

Several iPhone users confirmed that the iPhone hacks worked. Jean Sebastien, a television director in Paris, paid \$850 on eBay for his iPhone. No European wireless carrier is yet able to offer service for the device.



Apple Inc.

The iPhone from Apple and AT&T

Nevertheless, Mr. Sebastien said he followed Mr. Johansen's instructions and got it to work as a Web browser and iPod.

But it is doubtful many consumers will follow this route. To do so would mean buying an iPhone, which sells for \$499 or \$599, and only using it as an iPod and Web browser. Moreover, the hacked Web browser, which is designed to work in all areas reached by AT&T's wireless network, will only work in Wi-Fi hot spots.

More Carriers

Hackers are working on much more substantial overrides, according to comments on blogs and consumer Web sites. For example, they are trying to figure out ways to get the iPhone to work on the networks of other carriers. This is especially desirable overseas, where the iPhone isn't on the market. "It will be possible in two weeks," Mr. Sebastien predicted.

Hackers also are trying -- so far unsuccessfully -- to download unapproved applications off the Web and use the iPhone as a Wi-Fi phone. One Web posting gives iPhone owners guidance on how to activate the device with a cheap prepaid plan from AT&T rather than a two-year contract. But a comment on that site from a user said the hack doesn't work.

AT&T spokesman Mark Siegel said the company is "monitoring the situation and, if necessary, will take appropriate action to stop it." An Apple spokeswoman declined to comment.

Chafing at Restrictions

Some iPhone owners said they are justified in trying to circumvent Apple and AT&T's restrictions. They maintained that because they own the expensive phone, they should be free to use it on any network and download any application.

But Mr. Siegel said the iPhone "explicitly requires the customer to sign up for a wireless voice and data plan from AT&T." Any attempt to bypass this requirement is an "illegitimate use" of the phone," he said.

Consumer advocates have been critical of the iPhone requirements. Tim Wu, a law professor at Columbia University, said that in many other countries consumers can use their handsets on any network they choose. "I'm not sure these are terms that consumers should be subjected to," he said.

Apple has long played a cat-and-mouse game with hackers, often coming out on top. Successful hacks of iTunes, for example, often last a short time, until Apple releases a software update.

--Nick Wingfield contributed to this article.

Write to Li Yuan at li.yuan@wsj.com¹

URL for this article:

<http://online.wsj.com/article/SB118368127325158660.html>

Hyperlinks in this Article:

(1) <mailto:li.yuan@wsj.com>

Copyright 2007 Dow Jones & Company, Inc. All Rights Reserved

This copy is for your personal, non-commercial use only. Distribution and use of this material are governed by our [Subscriber Agreement](#) and by copyright law. For non-personal use or to order multiple copies, please contact Dow Jones Reprints at 1-800-843-0008 or visit www.djreprints.com.