

Friday, July 11. 2008

### Life as a lemming

Apparently today is iPhone-day in Canada, and this is one of the smaller line-ups for them, out near my place on the way into work. Bear in mind it has been raining fairly hard all morning and from what I've heard, the data pricing on the Rogers iPhone isn't the greatest.

Readers of this blog know I've been using a an unlocked iPhone on fido for quite some time now - I have a very old contract with Fido, unlimited data transfers that's been grandfathered in ever since. You can't buy these anymore, which is why I faithfully renew this contract with Fido and just use whatever phone I want on their network by only buying GSM unlocked phones, or in the case of the iPhone, finding out how to unlock them.

My former CIRA-Board colleague Michael Geist has pointed out that if Bill C-61 passes, GSM unlocking your (repeat YOUR) own phone will become unlawful. (I was unaware of this, which is why I recommend everyone subscribe to Michael's blog feed, he keeps on top of this stuff).

Suffice it to say, this is retarded but life is sometimes a tale told by idiots, especially when we implicitly feel like we couldn't get through our daily lives without installing a few of them to govern us.

This morning's post basically comes down to three themes for me:

People are lemmings. The ones that really wanted an Iphone waited, and waited, and waited until somebody told them "now is the time but you have to use Carrier X" and they will wait, in the rain, for hours to get it on terms dictated to them by somebody else. A cursory cost/benefit analysis by any of these people would have led them to the conclusion that they would have been further ahead buying one off of Ebay, or even right here in Toronto at a place like Bongo Wireless, already unlocked and able to use under one's own existing cellphone contract.

Apple is making the same mistake again. They originally lost the desktop market to windows because they wouldn't open up the licensing, yes, they've bounced back in recent years but not too long ago, they were on a deathwatch. All it takes is somebody (\*cough\* google \*cough\*), it doesn't matter who, to come up with the next "sexy must have wireless device" and release it unlocked and unrestricted and Apple will take it up the nads again. The sheer volume of the "grey market" for iphones should have telegraphed to Apple that there was far more upside to selling the damn phone unlocked to anyone who wanted it with any carrier.

For good or ill, for the right reasons or the wrong reasons, Artificial barriers create opportunities. If Bill C-61 passes, I will not sign some NDP petition, I will not picket in the streets, I will not go egg Jim Prentice's car. I will go into business. I have already been researching GSM unlocked, Wifi-enabled, dual-mode SIP/VOiP smartphones: there are a bunch being manufactured in China, there are a few Linux based ones - I'm going to start selling these things and running my own sip proxy to route the VOIP traffic. I am betting that over the long term, people will choose open access and mobility over lock-in - we built easyDNS on this concept - the telecom landscape is ripe for it.

Posted by Mark Jeftovic in Life, the Universe and Everything at 10:31

In response to the amazing deal offered by Rogers for the iPhone (amazing in the sense that I am in awe at how insulting and cynical it is) Andrew and I were talking about OpenMoko this aft;

<http://www.openmoko.com/>

It's very difficult to express your creativity from a black box and I think our kids are going to have a lower tolerance for un-hackable corporate lozenges than we do.

Anonymous on Jul 11 2008, 23:31