

The Ongoing Saga of Apple vs The FBI

March 2, 2016 – The battle between the FBI and Apple Computers over the government’s request that Apple break into a locked iPhone which was in the possession of a dead terrorist in San Bernardino just got messier. That’s because in a similar case on the east coast, a federal judge has now ruled that Apple doesn’t have to create a way to break into the iPhone of suspected drug dealer. But that’s unlikely to affect the California case for a couple of reasons. First, the judge on the east coast case is the same level as the judge on the west coast; meaning that the California judge is perfectly free to come to another conclusion. Second, regardless of what the court decides, any decision is likely to be appealed.

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s.src = 'http://widgets.digg.com/buttons.js';
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Frankly, from what we can see, the investigation has been botched from the beginning. First, someone in the FBI or the County of San Bernardino decided to fiddle with the phone. In the process, they managed to change the master password for the device, creating the need to break into it in the first place.

But setting that aside for a moment, there have been several computer experts who have come forward and said that there is no need for Apple to create a new operating system for the phone with a back door – which is what Apple has been claiming is required. We published one of the solutions offered earlier in the investigation and, more recently, John McAfee – CEO of McAfee Software - has offered to break into the phone for the FBI without damaging the data on it.

McAfee said that it would take his team three weeks to do the work. Had the FBI agreed, it is likely that they would have the data already. Instead, the phone is still the subject of a court case. As they said in the old west, “Time’s a-waister”

We have no idea what the outcome of this case will be. What we can say is that if the California case is settled with a

different ruling than that in the east coast case, there is a good chance that the case will eventually end up before the Supreme Court. In the meantime, all of the data on terrorist's iPhone is getting older and less useful by the day. It might be prudent for the FBI to begin considering one of the other alternatives it has for accessing the phone. In doing so, they might gain access to the data they want and allow Apple to continue to protect the privacy of its customers' data at the same time.

by Jim Malmberg

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