

Apple's Refusal to Help FBI Hack Terrorist's iPhone May Have Backfired

April 4, 2016 – It has been over a month now since Apple Computer refused to help the FBI hack into the iPhone of one of the San Bernardino terrorists. At the time, we were one of the few privacy websites to say that we thought that Apple's position was misguided. Now it looks like that position may have created more trouble for the company than it could have ever anticipated. Since our first article, the FBI has managed to break into the phone without Apple's help. And while the agency is keeping quiet about how they did it, they are also offering the help police departments around the country break into other iPhones that are the subject of other police investigations.

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When Apple initially refused to assist the FBI, the company publically stated that it was taking its position to protect the data of every iPhone user around the globe. So the FBI took the company to court and managed to get a federal court order forcing Apple to cooperate. Apple appealed.

As we all know, court cases can be time consuming. While Apple was in the midst of its appeal, the FBI was trying to work out a way to hack into the phone itself. And that is precisely what they did. This resulted in the agency asking court to dismiss the case against Apple. That happened last week.

Eventually, whatever the FBI did to hack into the phone will probably come to light. At that point, Apple is likely to make changes to its operating system, making the phones harder to hack into. But in the meantime, police agencies now have a tool to break into virtually any iPhone they have in their possession. To some, that will be a frightening thought.

Regardless of what you think about all of this, had Apple simply agreed to assist the FBI in the first place, the current

situation would likely have been avoided completely. At the very least, the company could have hacked into the phone and delivered it back to the FBI without ever revealing how they did it.

byJim Malmberg

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