

# The Academy of Plumbing 21

## The iPhone Crusade

The Digital  
Plumber  
By Paul Ellis

So, did Santa deliver, then? Lucky you. Be a bit reticent about using it in public places and watch out for hoodies, won't you? Apple's latest paradigm-shifting product (they hope) will be pretty high on the wish-list of those for whom Santa didn't deliver, and with good reason, because at long last, someone has finally designed a hand-held computer that works properly. Mostly.

I should qualify that last statement somewhat. I mean, someone has finally designed a hand-held computer that works properly *with a Macintosh*, because until now, mobile phone and PDA manufacturers have treated the Mac OS as a rather poor relation to the almighty Windows, with the result that synchronising your data with one of these things has been somewhat fraught at best. Such stress is a thing of the past with the iPhone; it even handles like a Mac and of course syncs everything perfectly. Er, apart from Leopard Mail's Notes, which were somehow forgotten, but I daresay a forthcoming firmware update will fix that.

### ENSNARE? NETTED, EVEN

This is another way in which the iPhone tends to differ from all others. It's controlled from iTunes and can't be connected to a network and activated any other way. Consequently, it assumes that its user has a Mac or PC, and therefore a way of reliably feeding software updates to it. At the time of writing the current firmware is v1.1.2. This feature is a mixed blessing to the



ourgeoning jailbreak community who somehow think that Apple's patented design and proprietary technology should be "open" to run any old software on any old network. Consequently, a bit of an arms race has broken out between the "jailbreakers" hacking to unlock the phone and Apple re-locking it, and occasionally completely trashing unlocked phones, with successive software updates.

So, what about this locking palaver? Well, Apple have famously done exclusive deals with just one carrier in each territory. In the USA it's AT&T; in the UK, O2; in Germany, T-Mobile;

in France, Orange. If you want to use an iPhone as a phone and not just as a low-capacity, expensive, highly-nickable iPod you also have to take out an 18-month data contract with Apple's anointed carrier. "Why?" ask the hoi polloi. "So that we can guarantee an incredible user experience", purr Apple. So that we can maintain our brand integrity and absolutely maximise our ROI, mutter Apple under their breath. And so it is, because if it is anything (apart from a fantastically well-designed handheld that works properly with a Macintosh) it is a cash-hoover, designed to extract money from your pocket and place it into Apple's and their anointed carriers'. Vodafone, being presently unanointed, are somewhat piqued by this and have attempted legal action against Apple, calling them anti-competitive. They've also sprayed the Tube with posters depicting some so-C20 risibly ugly fat gadget, covered in buttons and looking like an early prototype BlackBerry, trumpeting the fact that it is Windows inside and out and exclusive to them. Yeah, right. I find it hard to imagine muggers queuing up to swipe one of *them*.

### THE FRENCH

Back to the French, though. Narked by Apple's blatant attempt to undermine French culture with their iPod/iTunes monopoly, the French recently enacted legislation outlawing proprietary monolithic lock-ins such as these. Consequently, Apple are obliged to make unlocked iPhones available in France so that French mugger-bait

can chatter on their network of choice prior to having their iPhones nicked. Whether such iPhones will work outside France or a healthy eBay market for them will appear remains to be seen. Funnily enough, I'm with Apple on this issue, though. This could hardly be called a Windows-style monopoly. No-one is forcing anyone to buy an iPhone. If Apple want to guarantee the quality of their user experience by working exclusively with one carrier, and bullying that carrier with dreams of coolness, riches and enhanced market-share to make sure that the system actually works properly, then good for them. Just remember that you're buying into something uncomfortably close to a cargo cult, that's all.

Does it work? One of the iPhone's standout features is Visual Voicemail. No longer do you have to wait interminably while a voice menu system witters through your voicemail in chronological order to get to that really important message left by that caller you've just missed. The iPhone displays a list of voicemails as if they were emails or SMS messages, and you can scroll straight to the most urgent first. Obvious, really; but it only works over the EDGE cellular connection: if you're using WiFi to connect, you have to dial in to collect your voicemail in the traditional way. So, does Apple's choice of the 2.5G EDGE network system rather than 3G look like a dud? Probably not for Apple's US-centric initial target demographic. AT&T's CEO has already let on that an iPhone 2 due next Spring will be 3G, which could be rather more useful to

us Johnny Foreigners. More at <http://tinyurl.com/3dxvfn>.

### SUPPORTIVE

As well as choosing their own carriers (and presumably losing Visual Voicemail) the "jailbreakers" want to run their own software on the iPhone. Apple want to keep badly-designed crap, Trojans and viruses off it, so the only sanctioned way to make 3rd-party software for it is to create web applications in JavaScript that run within iPhone's Safari, where in theory they can't do much harm. What is possible? Some very handy stuff, actually.

- iGet Mobile is one of the most interesting, and also not exclusive to the iPhone as it will run on just about anything. It's a small Leopard-only server application that you run on your Macintosh. Point iPhone's Safari (or your device's web browser) at your Mac's IP address and suddenly you can browse its contents as if you were connected to it by file sharing. What is really cool and most pertinent to the likes of us, though, is that you can email files on your Mac from your Mac itself without having first to download them to the iPhone. So there you are on location in Ulan Bator. You get an email from your agent asking you to send them a specific image for a pitch. It's on your studio Mac. You've had the prescience to leave that Mac on, and awake, with iGet Mobile running. You log in from Safari, find the image, and mail it straight to your agent. This is cool. Of course, if you have your laptop you could do this with Leopard's Back

To My Mac, VNC or in several other ways, but being able to do it from a mobile phone connection is very cool. <http://tinyurl.com/2y8oe8>.

- iPhone Remote <<http://tinyurl.com/39judx>> consists of a small suite of applications that allow you to do other amusing things with your iPhone such as stream music and videos from your computer; capture its screen; simple iTunes Remote control; browse your files; run applescripts remotely; capture images with its iSight camera; and do basic Spotlight searches.

- Mark-Space's Missing Sync for iPhone gets around the lack of Notes synchronisation, and makes data migration from other PDA's to the iPhone more straightforward than it might otherwise be. <<http://tinyurl.com/2z3wqd>>

- There is no shortage of websites blathering about the iPhone, but among the more useful is iPhone Atlas ([www.iphoneatlas.com](http://www.iphoneatlas.com)).

- And as for figuring out how it works, Scott Kelby has written one of his usual if-you-want-to-do-this, do-that guides in The iPhone Book (<http://tinyurl.com/28u8bu>), which is highly recommended. The ultra-prolific David Pogue has written a Missing Manual, too, available from the same link.

**Next month it'll be back to Leopard, which I like more and more, with instructions for setting up Back To My Mac, iGet Mobile, and other goodies. See you then.**

*Those of you still hungry for information can keep up by periodically checking my blog at [www.thedigitalplumber.co.uk](http://www.thedigitalplumber.co.uk), where you'll also find my contact details.*

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