

18 February 2008

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Apple's iPhone
Apple

[More Than 400,000 iPhones Unlocked in China](#)

The number will grow if the handset is not officially released

Apple's iPhone, one of the most influential mobile devices from the recent years, has not been officially released yet in [China](#) and there are high chances that it will never be. However, according to In-Stat, a global market research company, there are more than 400,000 unlocked iPhones that use China Mobile's network, the largest in the country. This represents about 10% of the total number of iPhones sold by Apple world-wide until now, and probably more than the units sold in the whole Europe (not counting the unlocked ones, as their number is unknown). It's estimated that, world-wide, there are about 1,500,000 unlocked iPhones, this fact leading to important profit losses for Apple. Another aspect that's not really positive for Apple is that, in China, there are countless iPhone clones, mobile devices that resemble the iPhone but generally have an inferior quality and, of course, a much affordable price. So, when (and if) Apple succeeds to bring its handset to China, it will have some serious competition. However, officially bringing the device to China would still mean huge profits for Apple. According to InStat, about 20% of the total number of mobile phones sold in China are expensive and cost at least 4,000 CNY (more than \$500), despite the fact that the average income in the country is pretty low. Moreover, the research company said there are almost 30 million potential Chinese buyers for the iPhone, which is not hard to believe since China has about 500 million mobile subscribers. Apple tried several times to make a deal with China Mobile, which has more than 360 million subscribers, but the negotiations failed and, in January 2008, the Chinese operator said it has [called off](#) the discussions. Due to this, Apple might start negotiating with the country's other important mobile operator, China Unicom, which has more than 100 million customers. What's interesting is that Chinese consumers, unlike the US ones, do not use the iPhone for business purposes, but rather for Internet access and entertainment. Even so, it's clear that China wants the iPhone, so Apple should really try harder to make a deal with an important Chinese operator.