CHAPTER 1

Selecting, Buying, and Activating Your iPhone

If you believe everything you read, your iPhone is going to cost you thousands of dollars over a two-year period. You have to pay for the iPhone, for activation, for expensive monthly service plans (not to mention taxes and other fees), and if you decide to back out any time during that two years, you're going to cough over more money in early cancellation penalties. Right? Well, maybe not. There's a lot more going on in your ability to select and activate your iPhone than those glossy in-store pamphlets let on. In this chapter, you'll discover the down and dirty secrets of iPhone activation, plan selection, and even return policies. If you're weighing the choice of whether or not to purchase an iPhone and trying to figure out exactly how much you're going to be paying, this chapter is for you. Here are all the basic facts you need to select, buy, and activate your iPhone.

Picking Your Phone

In the world of the iPhone, the choices aren't wide. There are, at any time, only a couple of models. For example, at launch, there was a 4-GB model and an 8-GB model. And that was pretty much it for a month or two until Steve Jobs killed the 4-GB model, slashed the price on the 8-GB one, and refurbished ones appeared at the Apple Store. So how do you choose the model that is right for you? It all comes down to memory. Do you want to pay more for a few more gigabytes of onboard memory? It's not as if those extra gigabytes offer an inexhaustible resource. With enough videos and movies, you can easily run out of storage on an 160-GB iPod Classic, let alone a teeny flash-memory-based iPhone. So here are some questions you need to ask yourself:

How big is your music library? If your library is small, no problem. If it's large, the extra space on some iPhone models helps to store additional music and podcasts.

How many videos do you want to carry around? A single two-hour movie may occupy more than a gigabyte of storage. If you travel a lot, especially on airplanes, you may want to pay more to store additional movies and TV shows with those extra gigabytes.

Do you plan to carry lots of pictures? Although iPhone pictures are pretty small (a typical photo is 300 or 400 KB in size), if you carry a few thousand of them around, they do add up to some serious storage. Do you laugh at carrying that many pictures around on your phone? Apple's built-in iPhoto support makes it simple to put years of photo archives onto your iPhone with a single synchronization option. And taking and sending pictures from the phone couldn't be easier.

Do you need to carry lots of data? You might not think of your iPhone as a data storage device, but there are ways to use it (mostly involving e-mailing documents to yourself or by using a third-party application) to bring data along with you on the road. If you think you might need to do this, maybe those extra gigabytes could be put to good use.

How long do you plan to use this iPhone? If you're an early adopter who plans to trade up at the earliest possible opportunity whenever Apple offers a new unit, you may want to save your pennies now in the hope that a better unit with more memory quickly debuts. If, instead, you want to get the most use out of the iPhone for the longest period of time, paying more up front means you won't outgrow the memory quite as fast.

Considering System Requirements

iPhones aren't like most other cell phones. At heart, they're really iPods. And, like iPods, in order to effectively use one, you will need a computer with a USB 2.0 port and an Internet connection running iTunes 7.3 or later. iPhones need to connect to your computer on a regular basis to synchronize music, photos, e-mail contacts, calendars, and so forth.

You won't be able to sign up for AT&T phone service until you successfully connect your iPhone to iTunes. That means you need either a Macintosh running OS X 10.4.10 or later or a Windows computer running Windows XP (with Service Pack 2 or later) or Windows Vista (Home Premium, Business, Enterprise, or Ultimate). And it means you need an iTunes Store account.

Before you decide to purchase an iPhone, ask yourself whether you have a computer on-hand that has all these features available. If not, you might not be able to activate and use your iPhone.

■ **Note** If you haven't yet put iTunes on your computer, grab your free copy from `www.apple.com/itunes`. Versions are available for both OS X and Windows systems and are quick and easy to install.

Buying Your iPhone

After deciding among the available iPhone models, you're probably ready to pull out your credit card and go buy that iPhone (see Figure 1-1). So where should you go? To an AT&T store? To an Apple Store? Or should you buy online? You might be surprised to learn that there are better and worse choices.

I recommend buying your iPhone in person at a store. You can ask questions. You can make human connections. If something goes wrong with your purchase, you have a person who's there to help you work through it. This is not to say that calling Apple's support line is insufficient, it's just that being face to face with a real person makes solutions happen more readily.

The sad fact of the matter is that a significant, although small, percentage of iPhone purchases do not go smoothly. Some people end up with a screen flaw, such as dead screen pixels. It's not an uncommon problem and, if found soon after purchase, it may involve a trade out for a new unit. Others may have problems with their antennas or with activating their service. The chances of resolving these issues increase significantly when you have a real person to talk to.

As for the question of Apple or AT&T, I lean slightly toward buying at an Apple Store. It's an Apple product you're buying, and the Apple staff members are simply more knowledgeable about that product. Buying the physical unit at an Apple Store and holding an Apple receipt in your hand means that you're more likely to find help at the Apple Store itself than you might if you held an AT&T receipt.

The return policy does not apply to iPhones with defects. Apple Stores will happily replace defective iPhones regardless of their point of purchase, and if you have problems with your phone service, you can go to any AT&T store whether you purchased your phone there or not—it's the service you're dealing with, not the physical iPhone unit.

■ **Note** A few months after introducing the iPhone, Apple dropped the 4-GB model and slashed the price of the 8-GB unit from $599 to $399. It offered all early adopters a $100 store-credit rebate, regardless of whether they purchased their iPhones at an Apple Store or through AT&T.

Figure 1-1. *Having an Apple receipt means you may get better service with returns and exchanges at an Apple Store. AT&T personnel will help you resolve any issues with your service, wherever you bought your phone.*

Returns and Exchange Policies

Depending on your state of residence, you might be used to trying out phones and getting 30 days to cancel and return the unit. In California, you even get back the activation fee. The iPhone return policy is not so friendly.

With the iPhone, you have 14 days (not 30) to return your unit. If you bought it from AT&T, it must be returned to the original point of purchase: you can't buy at one store and return it to another. If the iPhone shrink-wrap has been opened, you'll be charged a 10 percent open-box restocking fee. Returns must include the phone, all accessories, and all manuals that shipped with the product. If your iPhone is defective, most stores will swap it for a new one within those same first 14 days with no penalty.

Assuming you sign up for a standard two-year postpaid AT&T contract (meaning you are billed at the end of each month of use), you're entitled to a refund of the AT&T activation fee if you cancel within three days of iPhone activation. Cancel within 30 days, and you can still terminate service without paying a penalty, but you will be charged for activation. After 30 days, you must pay an early termination fee of $175. Your service switches to a month-to-month automatic renewal after fulfilling your two-year agreement.

If you opt for a nonstandard, no-contract, month-by-month plan, you pay only for the months you use, and there are no early termination fees. Your credit card is charged in advance for each month of use, and you must contact AT&T before the monthly charge date when you wish to cancel. Otherwise, you will have paid for an extra month of service that you will not use. Learn more about the available plans and their trade-offs later in this chapter.

Bringing Your iPhone Home

Once you buy your iPhone, it's time to take it home, unpack, and get it set up. iPhone packaging (see Figure 1-2) is a small work of art. The iPhone ships in a box that contains the phone itself, a soft cloth for cleaning its screen, a dock, a USB connector cable, an A/C power adapter, those famous white ear buds, and a packet of documentation. Each of these items is important and will help you in your day-to-day use.

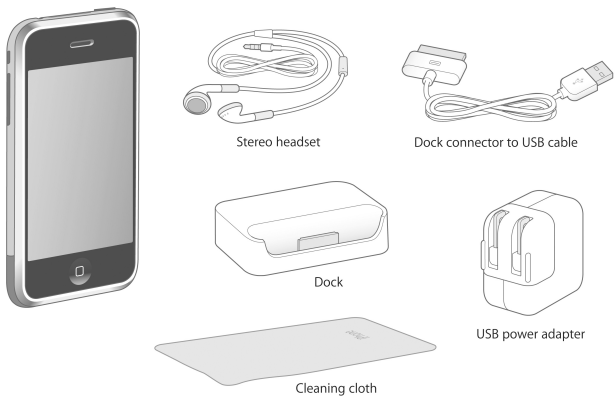

Figure 1-2. *The iPhone package combines compactness with beauty. It contains your new iPhone as well as documentation, ear buds, a charging/docking cradle, and more. (Image courtesy of Apple, Inc.)*

Cleaning cloth: Daily use of your iPhone leaves smudges. It's an inescapable reality for a device that functions using a touch-based interface. Apple included this cloth in the packaging to help you clean your iPhone screen more effectively than you would, say, using your t-shirt.

Charging/docking cradle (dock): The included dock allows you to store your iPhone in a convenient, upright, space-saving position. You can connect your cradle to your computer for docking and synchronizing data or to the included USB power adapter for charging.

Cable: The USB cable attaches your docking cradle to either your computer or the A/C adapter. When you want to travel lightly, your iPhone can connect directly to this cable. This allows you to skip the dock, but your iPhone won't be able to stand up the way it does with the cradle and will take up more desk space.

USB power adapter: The A/C power adapter included with your iPhone plugs directly into the wall and allows you to charge your iPhone (or any USB device, for that matter). It offers a single USB port. To use, just connect your iPhone to the adapter using the USB cable. It supplies the 5 volts required for powering USB devices.

Stereo headset (ear buds): The ear buds included with the iPhone differ slightly from those included with normal iPods. This stereo headset contains a built-in microphone and switch: the microphone allows you to take calls on your iPhone without holding the phone up to your ear, and the switch allows you to end calls as well as control music playback.

iPhone Feature Overview

Once you've unpacked your phone, take a few minutes to discover more about your new purchase. Figure 1-3 introduces the basic features on your iPhone.

The top of the iPhone houses a jack into which you can plug your earbuds, a Subscriber Identity Module (SIM) tray (where your phone's SIM card is stored), and a sleep/wake button which is used to power on and off certain features. The bottom of your iPhone has a built-in speaker and microphone and an indented slot for connecting to your dock. The iPhone's front has a receiver (earpiece) on top, which you use to listen to phone calls, a large touch screen, and a single Home button. You will not see this interactive screen until you have activated your iPhone through iTunes.

Figure 1-3. *iPhone feature breakdown. (Image courtesy of Apple, Inc.)*

Preparing for Activation

You have unpacked your iPhone but haven't yet connected it to iTunes. Now is a good time to review data on your computer. When your iPhone first activates, it will synchronize itself to iTunes and, depending on your computer, to your e-mail accounts, your calendars, and so forth. Before you go forward, here are some items you may want to review and clean up so your iPhone starts out its life with the freshest possible data:

Contacts: The iPhone can sync with Outlook or Outlook Express on Windows, Address Book or Entourage on a Macintosh, and Yahoo! Address Book on the Internet. To prepare for your first sync, review your existing contacts and make sure they're up to date with current phone numbers and e-mail addresses. If you use another program to manage contacts, consider migrating your contacts to one of these solutions. If you'd rather not, that's okay too. You can add contact information directly to your iPhone, although it's not as convenient as having the information automatically loaded for you.

Calendar: Your iPhone can synchronize with computer-based calendars just like it does with contacts. iPhone supports iCal and Entourage calendars on the Mac and Outlook calendars on Windows. Get your calendars into shape before your first synchronization, and you'll be ready to immediately manage your schedule both from your computer and your iPhone.

E-mail: Your iPhone works with most e-mail providers including Yahoo! Mail, Google Gmail, and AOL. If your e-mail provider uses the industry-standard POP3 and IMAP services, your service will work with iPhone. You may want to establish new accounts with these providers before you activate your iPhone. That way, they'll load onto your unit the first time you synchronize. You can always add new e-mail accounts later, but it's nice to have them all set up and available for use right away.

Music: Current iPhone models offer relatively small storage space when compared to, for example, iPod Video's generous 80-GB hard drive. To make the most of this limited space, set up play lists for your favorite songs and podcasts. Since, in all likelihood, you won't be able to synchronize your entire library to your new iPhone, invest time now in weeding through your media to find those items you most want to have on-hand.

Caution Make sure you've authorized your computer in iTunes (Store ➤ Authorize Computer) before syncing your music. If you don't, your music won't get copied to your iPhone.

Software and OS: Update to iTunes 7.3 or later before you attempt to activate your iPhone. And, if you're using a Macintosh, make sure you've updated your OS to at least OS X 10.4.10. You can download the latest version of iTunes from Apple at `http://www.apple.com/itunes/download`.

iTunes Account: Apple requires a current iTunes account in order to activate your iPhone (at least when you use normal nonhacking channels to activate the phone). If you do not already have one, you must sign up for a US account with the iTunes store. This requires a US address and credit card. Here are the steps you'll need to follow in order to create that new iTunes account:

1. Launch the iTunes application, and wait for it to load.
2. Locate iTunes Store in the column on the left side of the window. Click iTunes Store, and wait for the store window to load. You must be connected to the Internet for this to happen, because all the storefront information is stored at Apple.
3. Click the Sign In button at the top-right corner of the screen. iTunes opens the sign-in screen shown in Figure 1-4, which will allow you to either sign in with an existing account or to create a new one.

Figure 1-4. *The iTunes Sign In window allows you to sign in to iTunes with your existing account or begin the process of creating a new account.*

4. Click Create New Account. The screen clears, and a message welcoming you to the iTunes store displays.
5. Review the terms of service, and click Agree. A new window appears prompting you to create your account.
6. Enter your e-mail address and a password (you must enter the password twice for verification). Also enter a question and answer that will help verify your identity and the month and day of your birth. Review the other options on the page, and adjust them as desired before clicking Continue. Again, the screen will clear, and you'll move on to the final account creation step.
7. Enter a valid US credit card and the billing information for that credit card. These must match to finish creating your account. When you have entered the information, click Continue.

After following these steps, you will receive a confirmation e-mail at the address you specified while signing up. The e-mail welcomes you to the iTunes Store and provides you with the customer service web address (`http://www.apple.com/support/itunes/store`).

Connecting Your iPhone to the Computer

After ensuring you have an active iTunes account, you're ready to unpack your unit and connect it to your computer. Here are the steps you need to take:

1. Remove the iPhone from the box, and extract it from its factory wrapping. Also unwrap the dock and the included USB cable.
2. Locate the two ends of the USB cable. One is thin and marked with a standard three-pronged USB symbol. The other is wide and marked with a rectangle with a line in it.

3. Connect the wide end of the USB cable to the back of the dock. Connect the thin end to a spare USB 2.0 port on your computer.
4. Orient your iPhone. On the back of your iPhone, the Apple and the hole (actually your camera) should be at the top. The black bar is at the bottom (see Figure 1-5).
5. Locate the connection port at the bottom of your iPhone (see Figure 1-3). It is a rectangular hole, a little under an inch in width. Gently but firmly insert your iPhone into the connector on your docking cradle without twisting or forcing the connection. iTunes will launch, and your iPhone will chime softly.

If your iPhone does not automatically power on and display either the white Apple or the Connect to iTunes message, press and hold the Sleep/Wake button. With the main screen facing toward you, it is found at the top right of the iPhone. After a few seconds, the iPhone should wake up and display the white Apple as it powers on. If the iPhone does not respond and display either the white Apple or the Connect to iTunes message, contact the store where you purchased the phone.

Figure 1-5. *Easily orient your iPhone by locating the Apple symbol on its back. The Apple and the circle (that's your camera) are at the top. The black bar is at the bottom. With the phone oriented facedown like this, the Wake/Sleep button is located on the left, just above the camera.*

Activating Your iPhone

You will not be able to use your iPhone for anything but emergency calls until you activate it. Instead, the iPhone will prompt you to connect to iTunes. Activating the iPhone involves little more than selecting a service plan and registering your phone with AT&T, but until you do so, your iPhone is no more functional than an iBrick. In theory, this process is simple. In practice, it is the most frustrating part of using an iPhone. It can take days or hours to get your iPhone up and running, especially if you are porting a number or selecting a less popular plan. And to

top things off, the activation service sometimes goes offline for a bit, as shown in Figure 1-6. Once activated, your iPhone is a joy. Getting it activated can be a hassle.

Tip If you run into significant delays when activating your iPhone, give AT&T customer service a call. They will usually refund the $36 activation charge as a courtesy.

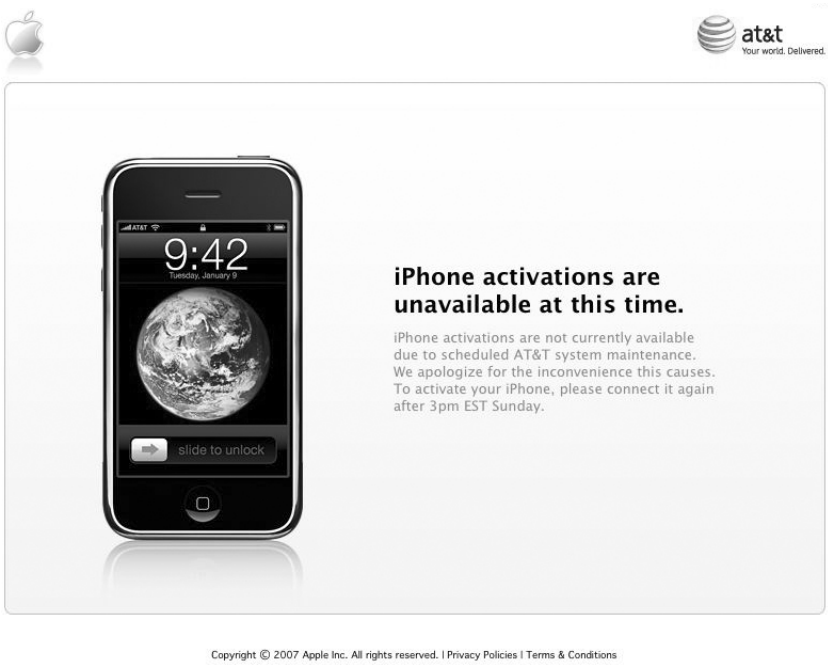

Figure 1-6. *When AT&T undergoes periodic system maintenance, iPhone activations may be delayed for hours.*

Selecting a Plan

AT&T offers quite a few of plans for the iPhone depending on the number of minutes and phones you use. There are individual plans and family plans. There are contract plans and noncontract plans. And don't let anyone tell you otherwise. Speaking to Salon's Farhad Manjoo, AT&T spokesman Michael Balmoris confirmed that customers who don't want to deal with contracts and early termination fees can sign up for GoPhone, AT&T's contract-free plan. As Manjoo wrote, "AT&T does not widely advertise this option; it has not publicly pointed out, for instance, that GoPhone is available."

As a rule, all the plans except the contract-free one oblige you to a 24-month commitment. If you wish to cancel your service before that time for any reason, you will be charged a $175 early termination fee and, unlike Verizon, AT&T does not pro-rate its cancellation fees. Cancel 23 months into your contract, and you'll still be charged $175. Still, the prices are fair, and if you don't mind the two-year contract, the value is good for what you get, which is unlimited data and a fair number of telephone minutes that roll over from month to month.

If you know in advance that you will not use the phone for 24 months, you may save money by opting for the contract-free GoPhone plan. Per-minute costs are substantially higher, more than double the price in most cases, and SMS messages are not included in the base price (normal plans all include 200 SMS messages). Instead, messages are charged at a per-message rate against the balance on your account. Each message—sent or received—costs $0.15. On the lowest rate plan, that's equivalent to a minute of airtime per SMS message.

The standard contracts are only available to customers with good credit. Fail the credit check, and you will be given the option to place a security deposit with AT&T or to sign up for the GoPhone plan, in which you pay in advance for each month of use. iPhone users with good credit who want to opt for the month-to-month plan must work around the normal activation system as detailed later in this chapter.

Table 1-1 provides a quick rundown of the available plans.

Table 1-1. *Initial iPhone Plans and Their Costs*

Plan Type	Monthly Costs	Features	Two-Year Costs
24-month individual contract	$60/$80/$100	450/900/1350 minutes. 450/Unlimited/Unlimited minutes nights and weekends. Unlimited data. 200 SMS text messages. Visual voicemail. Rollover minutes.	$1440/$1920/$2400 + $36 activation + taxes and fees. $175 early termination penalty.
24-month family contract	$80/$100/$120	700/1400/2100 minutes. Unlimited nights and weekends. Unlimited data. 200 SMS text messages. Visual voicemail. Rollover minutes.	$1920/$2400/$2880 + $36 activation + taxes and fees. $175 early termination penalty.
Replacing current phone with iPhone on an existing contract (Additional 24-month contract commitment)	$20/$30/$40	Minutes from plan. Unlimited data. 200/1500/Unlimited SMS text messages. Visual voicemail.	Plan costs + $480/$720/$960 + taxes and fees. $175 early termination penalty.
Month-to-month Pick Your Plan	$50/$60/$70/$90	200/300/400/650 minutes. 0/1000/Unlimited/Unlimited nights and weekends. Unlimited data. Each SMS text charged at $0.15 against plan balance. Visual voicemail. Rollover minutes.	$1200/$1440/$1680/ $2160 + taxes and fees if used for 24 months. Cancel anytime.

Tip After a first month shipping enormous and detailed bills, which ran to dozens if not hundreds of pages in length, AT&T pledged to update its billing process with shorter and more pertinent invoices. To save a tree or five, call AT&T, and sign up for their paperless billing option. This online option provides 24-hour access to your iPhone account information. Beware, though, that you may be charged a small fee to access full account call-by-call details with the paperless option. Seems kind of unfair, if you ask me, when you're saving AT&T money and helping the environment.

The Activation Process

As you've been warned, activating your iPhone can be frustrating. When it works, it works easily, and you're done in just a few minutes. When it does not, you can run across many obstacles. Here are some simple steps that will guide you through iPhone activation. Be aware that these steps will vary as Apple updates its activation process:

1. Read through the Welcome to Your New iPhone screen, and click Continue.
2. If you are already an AT&T/Cingular wireless customer, choose whether to replace a phone on your existing account or to add a new line to your existing account. If you are new customer, select whether to activate one new iPhone, or two or more. Make your selection, and click Continue.
3. When transferring a number, you will need to enter the phone number you want transferred, the account number, billing Zip code, and (if needed) your account PIN number (your password). If you don't want to transfer a number, just click Continue.
4. iTunes now prompts you to select a monthly plan. If you are an existing customer, these are the add-on data plans listed in Table 1-1. If you are activating several iPhones, you will see the family plan options. If you are activating one iPhone, iTunes presents the individual plans (see Figure 1-7). Select one of these plans. At the time of this writing, the activation screens do *not* allow you to select a month-to-month plan directly. You must first fail a credit check, which will occur later in these steps.

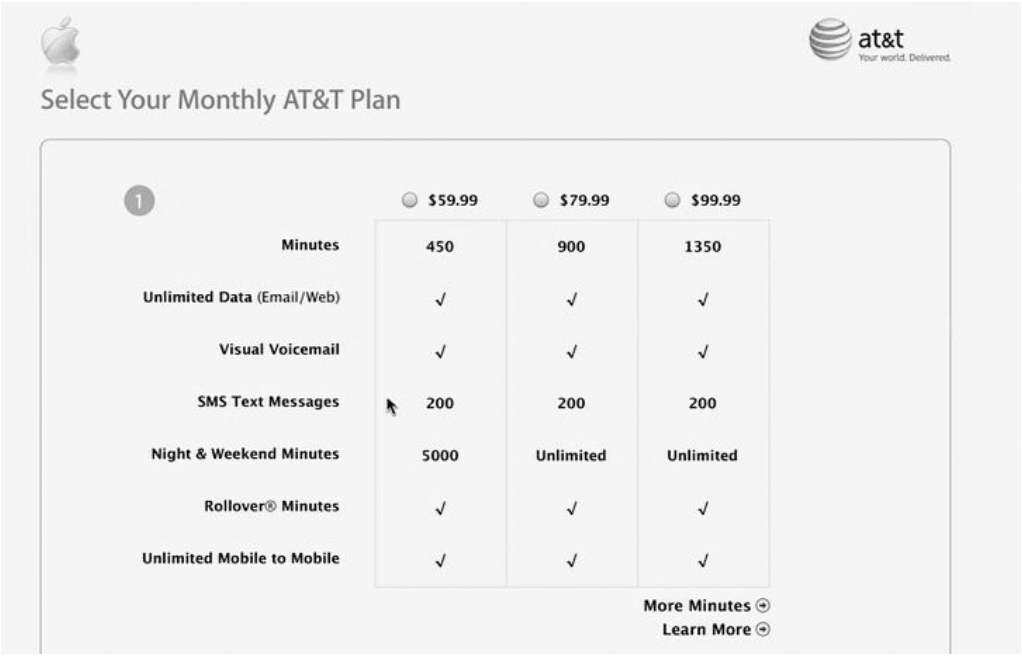

Figure 1-7. *These are the standard plans on offer for individual iPhone users. If you'd like to add additional minutes, click More Minutes. Otherwise, scroll down the screen to view options for extra SMS messages.*

5. If you want to add text SMS messages to your (standard, non-GoPhone) plan, you can add 1500 SMS messages for $10 per month or unlimited messages for $20 per month. Select one these options at the bottom of the screen.

Note SMS stands for Short Message Service, the proper name for what normal human beings call "text messaging."

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6. Click Continue.
7. Enter your iTunes ID and password, and click Continue. The iTunes ID is usually the e-mail address you used to create your iTunes account. If you don't have an iTunes account, just click Continue, and iTunes will walk you through the iTunes account creation process described earlier in this chapter.
8. Enter your birth date, choose which e-mails you want to receive, and click Continue.

9. Enter your billing information. This includes your name, billing address, home phone number, and social security number. If you want to choose a GoPhone plan, enter 999-99-9999 as your SSN. This number tells AT&T that you decline to provide your social security information; there are no valid SSNs that start with 999. According to the US government, you are not legally bound to provide a social security number to AT&T (`http://www.ssa.gov/pubs/10002.html`). Do *not* make up a number. Alternatively, you may call AT&T and request a number to enter that specifies the prepaid option.

10. Read through the iPhone Terms and Conditions, and check the box that indicates you agree to the terms. Click Continue.

11. Read through the AT&T Terms and Conditions. Check the box to agree, and click Continue.

12. Review the information, and click Submit.

13. Wait while AT&T processes your activation. If you're done, you'll receive a congratulations note and your new mobile phone number. If you get a note saying that AT&T will take more time to process your activation, you'll have to wait. Check your e-mail for updates. If you failed your credit check—deliberately or not—proceed to the next step.

14. If you failed the credit check, iTunes will tell you to either enter an AT&T pre-approval credit check code or choose a prepaid plan (see Figure 1-8). Click "Choose prepaid plan".

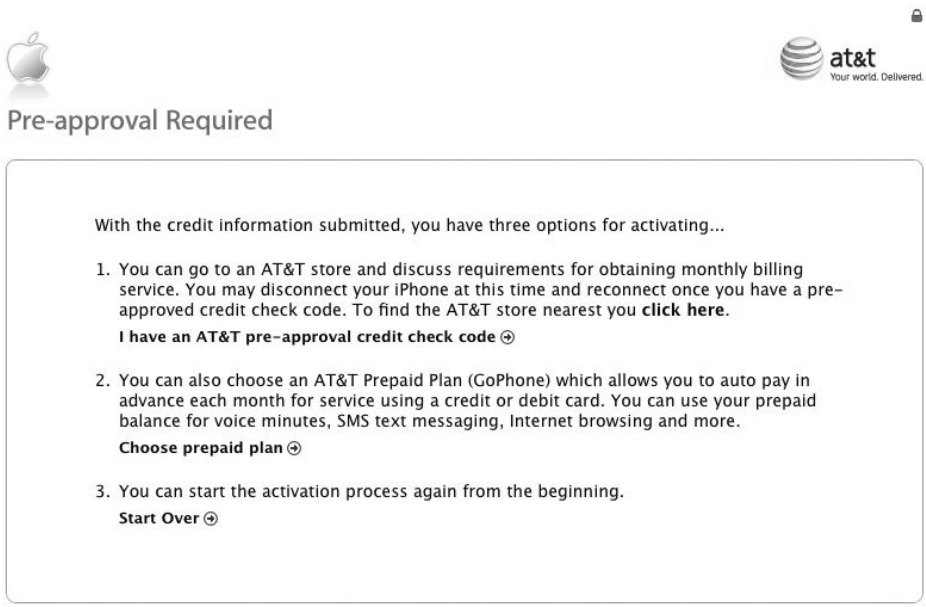

Figure 1-8. *After failing the AT&T credit check—either deliberately or inadvertently—you will be presented with these options, allowing you to select AT&T's unadvertised prepaid plan.*

15. Select one of the four prepaid GoPhone plans, optionally adding 200 SMS messages for $5 per month or unlimited for $20 per month. Click Continue.
16. Agree to the AT&T GoPhone Service agreement, and click Continue.
17. Wait. If you receive a phone number, you're ready to start using your iPhone. If you get a note saying that it will take more time to process your activation, go to an AT&T store. Ask them to cancel your activation and switch out your SIM card for a new one. Return home and try the process again.

A SIM card (which stands for Subscriber Identity Module) is a small card that slides into the top of your iPhone (see Figure 1-3). In most experiences that have been reported to me, the "activation will take more time" message is the kiss of activation death. Your iPhone will activate with GoPhone immediately, or it never will. A fresh SIM card means your iPhone has another chance to succeed quickly or fail slowly. Don't be afraid to return to the AT&T store and repeat as needed.

Understanding the Downside of Prepaid Service

If you end up choosing GoPhone iPhone service, there are a number of issues you need to be aware of that do not affect postpaid iPhone users:

Overall expense: The cheapest GoPhone plan costs just $10 less than the cheapest standard plan. You get no SMS package by default (you pay in minutes instead), and each minute of use costs more than double what it does on the standard plan. If you're a moderate to heavy phone user, your monthly costs may grow very high.

Different roaming and international policies: Make sure you check with AT&T before you attempt to roam or use your iPhone internationally. AT&T has separate GoPhone policies and pricing for these features.

Constant alerts: When on a prepaid plan, AT&T notifies you after each call and text, letting you know your account balance. These constant balance updates can be annoying.

Nontransferable numbers: If, for any reason, you need to replace your iPhone—if it's stolen or damaged in an accident—you cannot bring your existing GoPhone number to the new iPhone. You'll be able to transfer your minutes and your remaining balance but not the number itself. This is an unfortunate AT&T GoPhone policy that you need to take into account if you choose to go prepaid.

Syncing Your New iPhone

Once you've activated service, you're ready to synchronize your iPhone with your computer. This allows you to initialize your iPhone's music, movies, podcasts, e-mail accounts, calendar, bookmarks, and so forth.

After activation, your iPhone appears in the iTunes source list (left-hand column on the screen). If you own and use an iPod, you're already familiar with iPhone sync. If not, here's a quick overview.

Click your iPhone's name in the source list to open its preferences in the main iTunes window. The tabs along the top of the window allow you to set each of the options associated with your iPhone.

Tip Click your iPhone's name a second time to open a text edit field that allows you to edit the name. You can name your iPhone more creatively than "John Appleseed's iPhone". I call my iPhone "Bologna" just for the laugh.

The Summary tab (see Figure 1-9) displays your iPhone overview including the iPhone's name, capacity, currently installed firmware version, serial number, and phone number. From this page, you can check for firmware updates and restore your iPhone to a pristine factory-installed condition.

The Info tab allows you to select which contacts, calendars, mail accounts, and bookmarks are synced to your phone. Select those items you want to sync by checking check boxes, and click Apply. You can sync any POP3 or IMAP e-mail account.

The Music tab specifies which songs, play lists, and music videos you want to store on your iPhone. If you own a large music library, you'll want to select just your favorite play lists or create smart play lists (covered later in this book) to establish an ever-changing collection. The Photos tab lets you synchronize your iPhone photo collection with iPhoto. The Podcasts and Video tabs allow you to select individual shows or recent unwatched/unlistened-to items. Make your selections for these tabs, and click Apply. The Capacity bar at the bottom of the screen monitors how much space remains on your device.

Note When you receive a phone call while syncing data, the synchronization will pause and allow you to answer the call. You can continue to sync after you hang up.

Figure 1-9. *iTunes allows you to manage the content loaded onto and synchronized with your iPhone. Each tab offers a variety of controls, allowing you to choose what information gets loaded onto your iPhone at each sync.*

The Hacks

Some people want or need to take their iPhones to the next level. They may live in an area without iPhone/AT&T service. They may want to activate their iPhones without using iTunes. They may want to transfer existing AT&T accounts to their iPhones without recommitting to another 24 months of service. Here is a quick roundup of most significant iPhone activation hacks that were available during the first months after the iPhone rollout.

■ **Caution** Use these tools at your own risk. If you're not willing to possibly brick your iPhone (make it unusable), you're best off not trying these hacks. Although I have tested them, these utilities are not official, not sanctioned, not entirely safe, marginally documented, and may require you to be comfortable at the Unix command line. These hacks depend on the continuing goodwill of Apple, which may or may not prevent users from accessing these via their program of regular iPhone firmware updates.

The No-Contract, No-Service, Sixth Generation iPodPhone

Many users, particularly in countries without access to iPhones, have expressed a desire to use the iPhone as a sixth generation iPod. Even without phone service, the iPhone still functions as an iPod, and the built-in WiFi technology allows you to surf the Internet with Safari around the world when you're near an open WiFi hotspot. To make this happen, you have two choices. You can activate the iPhone in the United States as a GoPhone and immediately cancel service, or you can use one of the hacker iPhone activation tools that have sprung up on the Internet. Run a Google search for *iPhone activation tool*. You are looking specifically for the tools called iASign, iPhoneTool, or one of their descendents. I have activated and deactivated my iPhone many times using several of these tools.

Using the iPhone with a Non-iPhone AT&T SIM Card

Taking activation hacking to the next step are tools that allow you to activate a non-iPhone account with your iPhone. This involves manually moving SIM cards between the phones and using unauthorized tools to create authorization information for your iPhone. This kind of hack is even more risky than the iPodPhone hack. If you're determined to find out more about doing this, Google for *iASign*.

I have personally tested this using a SIM from a disposable pay-as-you-go AT&T phone, and it does work. You can place calls, receive calls, and surf the Internet (at a very high cost per kilobyte). Visual voicemail does not work with prepaid cards, nor does the YouTube application. To add more money, just buy a card at Target or Wal-Mart, and add it to your phone account. This option works best for people who mostly want to use their iPhones offline with WiFi but need to make or receive the occasional call. Costs can be low—as little as $100 a year—but unit prices for calls and data are extremely high. Expect to pay $0.25 per minute for phone calls and $0.01 per kilobyte of data transfer.

You can also use this hack to transfer a SIM from a normal (prepaid or postpaid) AT&T/Cingular account. This allows you to continue using your current account with your iPhone without changing your costs or committing to another 24 months of service. As with the prepaid card, you lose visual voicemail and access to YouTube videos. Your data plan depends on how you set up your account, and while it will probably transfer over without incident, there are reports of users having problems using their normal data plans on the iPhone.

Unlocking the iPhone

Technically speaking, it is legal in the United States to unlock your own phone, allowing you to use third-party SIMs, such as those from T-Mobile. Officially, AT&T will unlock phones for international travel after the phone's SIM has been registered for 90 days for accounts in good standing. In practice, Apple has not designed the iPhone to be unlocked. AT&T recommends you buy an inexpensive cell phone to take with you for travel, such as a Motorola disposable, and will provide the unlock code for that phone 90 days into your iPhone service.

Be aware that the iPhone is SIM locked. You cannot use a third-party carrier's SIM in your iPhone without unlocking your phone. Third-party unlocking software (namely iUnlock and AnySIM) appeared within months of the iPhone release. In September 2007, Apple responded, saying that it would not support unlocked phones and that its firmware releases might brick those phones.

Insuring and Repairing Your iPhone

AT&T does not, at the time of this writing, offer an insurance plan for the iPhone, and it has indicated that it does not plan to offer coverage anytime soon. Instead, you'll need to call your renter's or home insurance carrier to see how much you'll have to pay for an iPhone rider (a rider is placed on top of an existing policy, adding coverage for a specific item not covered under the standard plan). Allstate, Geico, and State Farm quote $5–$20 per year on top of an existing policy.

Your iPhone is covered under Apple's Limited Warranty for one year. You can add one extra year of iPhone AppleCare for $69. This extends your hardware repair coverage to two years in total. If interested, you can purchase this option online at the Apple Store (`http://store.apple.com`). Once the warranty expires, iPhone repairs costs $199 for 4-GB models and $249 for 8-GB models, plus $6.95 for shipping and handling. Apple will replace your iPhone battery for $79 (plus $6.95 shipping and handling) if your phone is out of warranty.

■ **Caution** If you plan to hack your iPhone, be aware that unauthorized modifications will void your warranty. Apple also excludes coverage for damages from accidents (like dropping your iPhone onto a concrete floor), unauthorized service (like trying to replace your own battery), and misuse (like using your iPhone as a hammer).

When you bring in your iPhone for service, you can borrow a loaner iPhone from Apple for a flat $29 charge. Pop out your iPhone SIM (Apple provides a paperclip so you can poke it into the top of your iPhone and release the SIM tray) and place it in the loaner while your own unit undergoes repairs. Service phones are available at most Apple stores.

If you can, make sure to back up your iPhone by syncing it to iTunes *before* bringing it in for service. Apple will usually restore your iPhone to factory condition, which means you'll lose any data stored on the iPhone during the repair and service process.

Whether you buy an AppleCare protection plan or not, be aware that you are entitled to two years of complimentary telephone support (1-800-MY-IPHONE) during the term of your AT&T wireless contract. You can find a complete list of ways to contact Apple Support at `apple.com/support/contact`.

Accessorizing Your iPhone

At this time, the iPhone accessory market remains pretty limited, and Apple packages pretty much everything you need in the standard iPhone box. You may want to buy a headphone adapter cord, so you can use your personal earphones with your iPhone. The iPhone's audio jack is too slim and too deep to accommodate normal headphone plugs. Expect to pay $10–$15 for an adapter. This lets you use your favorite headset, but you will lose access to the iPhone microphone and squeeze control that live onboard the standard earbuds.

Purchasing a case is another thing you may consider. Beware of cases that fit around the iPhone unit itself. Many of these accessories block access to parts of the iPhone touch screen,

and some may cause wear or scratching. Soft carry bags and iPhone socks are good choices for protecting your iPhone without interfering with on-board functionality.

Finally, consider buying a wired remote control. This allows you to control audio playback while the iPhone remains in your pocket. Unlike previous iPod models, the iPhone offers no physical playback controls on the device itself. To pause playback or switch tracks, you must view and access virtual controls on the screen. A wired remote lets you push buttons instead.

Summary

In this chapter, you've seen how to select and purchase your iPhone. You've discovered what's involved in activating your iPhone and seen the various plans on offer, both advertised and not. To wind things up, here is a quick overview of some key points from this chapter:

- Phone choices are limited, but whichever iPhone you choose, you'll probably want to buy it at the Apple Store if you can.
- Make sure your computer is compatible with iPhone before you buy.
- When activating, know in advance what kind of plans are available and which one you want to use. Deciding in advance can save you many activation headaches.
- If you want to hack your iPhone and avoid iTunes activation, the tools are out there. Use at your own risk, and be aware that Apple may disable those hacks at any time.
- iPhones are not cheap. Protect your investment by insuring your phone. Also consider adding AppleCare for an additional year's coverage against hardware repairs.
- The iPhone technical support is free for two years. Take advantage of it at 1-800-MY-IPHONE (1-800-694-7466).