

= 300 @-@ page iPhone bill =

A 300 @-@ page iPhone bill from AT & T Mobility mailed in a box was the subject of a viral video made by YouTube personality Justine Ezarik , best known as iJustine , which became an Internet meme in August 2007 . Ezarik 's video focused on the unnecessary waste of paper , as the detailed bill itemized all data transfers made during the billing period , including every email and text message . Stories of unexpected billing issues began to circulate in blogs and the technical press after the Apple iPhone 's heavily advertised and anticipated release , but this video clip brought the voluminous bills to the attention of the mass media .

Ten days later , after the video had been viewed more than 3 million times on the Internet and had received international news coverage , AT & T sent iPhone users a text message outlining changes in its billing practices . The information technology magazine Computerworld included this incident in its list of " Technology 's 10 Most Mortifying Moments " .

= = Background = =

Apple released the iPhone in the United States with a software " lock " so it could only be used on the AT & T Mobility network . After purchase , buyers activated their iPhone 's AT & T service contract using the Apple iTunes software , during which buyers had the ability to choose their billing preference ; however , if no option was specified during activation , AT & T defaulted to detailed billing . Detailed billing itemized every data transfer , including background traffic for e @-@ mail , text messaging , and Web browsing . This generated a large number of entries on the detailed bills .

After a month 's time , as early adopters started receiving their first monthly bills , stories of unusually large and expensive iPhone bills began to circulate . The 300 @-@ page bill was exceptional , but other heavy users received 50- to 100 @-@ page bills . One of the first to attract wider attention was from Ben Kuchera , gaming editor for the technology @-@ related website Ars Technica , who described his 34 @-@ sheet , double @-@ sided bill and another 104 @-@ page bill sent to a colleague , writing , " While many of us have had smart @-@ phones for some time , we 've never seen a bill like this . " However , it was the release of Justine Ezarik 's video that acted as a catalyst to bring widespread media attention to this aspect of the iPhone story .

= = Video = =

Justine Ezarik , then a 23 @-@ year @-@ old Pittsburgh @-@ area graphic designer and sketch comedian , who video blogged under the name iJustine , received her 300 @-@ page bill on Saturday , August 11 , 2007 and decided to use it as a prop for a self @-@ produced video shot in a coffee shop . She posted the edited one @-@ minute clip to several popular Internet video hosting services by the following Monday . In the first week , the video received over 500 @,@ 000 total views on YouTube , 350 @,@ 000 views on Revver , 500 @,@ 000 views on Break.com and 1 @,@ 100 @,@ 000 views on Yahoo Video , as self @-@ reported by the four popular Internet video sites as of August 22 . Total views were reported to exceed 8 million by the end of 2007 . Ezarik said she earned \$ 2 @,@ 000 from the video from Revver .

Portions of the video were also televised along with one @-@ on @-@ one interviews with Ezarik by several national and local news programs in the United States , including CNN , Fox News Channel , WTAE @-@ TV , and WPXI @-@ TV . ABC News Now also included independent reporting by an ABC News Radio reporter in their video interview .

Ezarik 's Internet video commentary focused on the unnecessary waste of paper billing . In the video she highlights the physical size of the bill , not the amount due . " I have an iPhone and I had to switch to AT & T. So , that 's wonderful . Well , I got my first AT & T bill , right here in a box , " she says at the start of the video . The rest of the video , set to the distinctive music used in American iPhone television commercials , shows her opening the box and flipping through the pages in fast motion . The clip ends with the on @-@ screen caption , " Use e @-@ billing . Save a forest . "

Her other comments also followed along the same lines . In a blog posting , she wrote , " Apparently , they give you a detailed transaction of every text message sent and received . Completely unnecessary . " She told a USA Today reporter , " This is so silly , there 's no reason they need to send you this much information . " Ezarik is a heavy user who typically sends and receives tens of thousands of text messages a month , which generated an exceptionally long , \$ 275 bill ? 300 double @-@ sided pages that had to be sent in a box with postage charges of \$ 7 .

She had no complaints about the iPhone itself , saying , " I made the video only to point out the comical aspect of my phone bill being delivered in a box . As for the iPhone ? I love it . "

= = Reaction = =

= = = Company = = =

AT & T Mobility , the mobile phone service provider for the iPhone , said through spokesman Mark Siegel that the size of this bill was exceptional . " We 're not sending lots of boxed bills to customers , " he told USA Today . He said that the billing is the same for all AT & T mobile users , but the popularity and functionality of the iPhone gave it new visibility . " It 's no different than with any other bill for any other device or any other service that we offer . "

Later , on August 18 , AT & T issued a statement saying : " Our customers have the option of receiving a bill that is detail @-@ free . Also , we have for years encouraged our customers to switch to online billing because it is convenient , secure , and environmentally friendly . " Then , on August 22 , AT & T announced via text message to iPhone users that it was removing itemized detail from paper bills . Ezarik responded , " Looks like they may have got the message , " in response to AT & T 's action . Company spokeswoman Lauren Garner claimed public reaction was not the reason for the company 's switch from detailed to summary billing , saying , " This was something we planned all along . "

= = = Industry = = =

AT & T may not have anticipated the downstream effects of iPhone customers ' high data usage . As a result , AT & T call centers were flooded with complaints about the size of the bills .

Internet reporter Dana Blankenhorn stated that the size of the bill illustrated a problem with the telephone companies ' " event based " or connection @-@ oriented business model and used it to argue for open spectrum in a radio frequency spectrum auction in the U.S. scheduled for 2008 . He contrasted how telephone billing considers every action a separately billable event , while the Internet model is based on a flat fee for best @-@ effort delivery in connectionless mode transmission .

The information technology magazine Computerworld reported on the incident , saying the company 's " extraordinarily detailed billing process resulted in some users receiving bills that ran dozens or even hundreds of pages long . " It published the gaffe in its list of " Technology 's 10 Most Mortifying Moments " .

= = = Environmental = = =

Rob Enderle , a Silicon Valley tech analyst , also echoed Ezarik 's environmental activism , saying , " AT & T should get a new tagline ? use AT & T , kill a tree . " The USA Today story was also titled " How many trees did your iPhone bill kill ? " According to blogger Muhammad Saleem , Apple 's aim to have 10 million iPhone users by the end of 2008 would require the logging of about 74 @,@ 535 trees annually , assuming an average 100 @-@ page monthly bill . An editorial in The Blade , an independent newspaper in Toledo , Ohio , called the detailed billing " absurd and environmentally wasteful " .

== Security ==

One security conscious commenter on the Engadget consumer electronics blog addressed the privacy implications of the oversize bills given the limitations of personal paper shredders , by speculating on whether it would be more practical to dispose of these large bills by burning them to protect personal information . An editor for the libertarian monthly Reason also speculated about the usefulness of the detailed information to government investigators . The original Ars Technica blog posting , on the other hand , dismissed privacy concerns , showing that the detail pages do not contain sensitive information .

== Other outsized iPhone bills ==

Press accounts of this story also included related details and comments :

The founder of a Tampa , Florida think tank received a 42 @-@ page bill and told a reporter , " It 's ridiculous . "

An Oak Harbor , Ohio teacher called his 52 @-@ page bill " the biggest phone bill I 've ever gotten in my life " .

A partner of a Macintosh consulting firm called his bill " 60 pages of nothingness " .

A business consultant from Virginia received a 62 @-@ page bill and asked a reporter , " Why would you send bills that large ? "

A software company owner near Seattle , Washington posted on his blog a picture of a Maltese dog sitting on his 127 @-@ page bill spread out on the floor. and asked , " Has anyone on the Apple Environmental Team seen an AT & T bill ? "

" The Packet Rat " columnist wrote in Government Computer News that his wife received a 150 @-@ page boxed iPhone bill and commented , " OK , how many trees did they have to kill to send out the first month 's bills ? "