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Apple iPhone remote access questioned

Apple may not be dialling in on your iPhone after all

by Stuart Miles published on 8 August 2008

Earlier today we reported on a story that Apple had implemented the capability to remotely disable applications on a users iPhone based on whether or not that application was on a blacklist.

Now countering the claim is not Apple, but John Gruber from Daring Fireball who says that Jonathan Zdziarski has got it all wrong.

Zdziarski, who has written two books on the iPhone, had originally said of the code that he had found:

"This suggests that the iPhone calls home once in a while to find out what applications it should turn off. At the moment, no apps have been blacklisted, but by all appearances, this has been added to disable applications that the user has already downloaded and paid for, if Apple so chooses to shut them down.

Gruber however insists that while "there may well be some sort of kill switch that Apple can deploy to remotely disable an app that's already installed...this list is not it," before citing "An informed source at Apple" confirming to him that "clbl" in the URL stands for "Core Location Blacklist", and that it does just that.

Supposedly, "it is not a blacklist for disabling apps completely, but rather specifically for preventing any listed apps from accessing Core Location ó an API which, for obvious privacy reasons, is covered by very strict rules in the iPhone SDK guidelines."

We will keep you posted.

