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O2 and Vodafone working on iPhone tethering

Operators caught on the hop?

by Amy-Mae Elliott published on 18 March 2009

Mobile phone operators in Europe have been forced into the boardroom to work out new plans for dealing with Apple's latest iPhone announcement.

Apple has on Tuesday announced that the new software update, version 3.0, due out in the summer for the iPhone will be capable of allowing users to "tether" the device to a computer to act as a modem.

"We're supporting tethering in the client side, we're building that support in. We're working with our carriers around the world. We are building that support in", Scott Forstall, senior vice president of iPhone software for Apple, when asked where Apple stands on tethering for the iPhone 3.0 software.

Reading between the lines, Forstall's response suggests that although an iPhone update to 3.0 will be capable of tethering, it's going to be down to the operator to decide if it will allow it.

Given, it seems, zero pre-warning of this new feature, Vodafone and O2 have all been caught without a confirmed "yes we will", or "no we won't" answer.

"We are working with them to ensure new features including tethering are fully supported on our network but we are not making any announcements yet", an O2 spokesperson told Pocket-lint on Wednesday.

Vodafone too is hesitant to confirm its plans for the iPhone around the globe:

"We are discussing the situation at the moment, but don't have anything to confirm, we will keep you posted", a spokeswoman told us over the



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phone.

Tethering is a way of piggy-backing your phone's connection in order to get online with your laptop, however operators in the past have been keen to avoid such features as surfing on your computer is a much quicker and easier process allowing you to enjoy unlimited bandwidth and therefore more data than the operator might want.

T-Mobile in Germany has declined to comment.

We will keep you posted.