

## Technology

# China Unicom in talks over iPad and iPhone 4

(Agencies)

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A customer looks at an iPhone 4 at the Apple Store 5th Avenue in New York June 24, 2010. People lined up hours in advance hoping to snag one of the "limited" quantity slated for retail sale only. AT&T will begin selling the iPhone 4 at retail on June 29, on a first-come first-served basis. [Agencies]

China Unicom, the country's second-largest mobile phone carrier, has entered talks with Apple Inc. about offering the iPhone 4 and the iPad in the world's most populous country, a person familiar with the situation said Thursday.

China Unicom already offers older versions of the iPhone in China, but Apple hasn't yet announced plans to offer either the new iPhone 4 or the iPad in the country.

China Unicom, which confirmed local media reports of the discussions, has sold a disappointing number of the iPhone 3, in part because local laws have left it without WiFi connectivity.

The person declined to give any details on the talks. It wasn't clear if any deal would involve offering the iPhone 4 with Wi-Fi connectivity.

The iPad tablet has been enormously popular elsewhere in the world, selling 3 million units at \$499 or more in its first three months. The recently launched iPhone 4 is also shaping up as a success, with customers queuing as the smartphone was launched in five countries.

But Apple has yet to make a serious impact in China, where regulations have kept the Silicon Valley company from penetrating a country that is expected to soon become the top buyer of personal computers.



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China Unicom said it hoped the iPhone 4, which has gone on sale in the US and four other countries, would be available through China Unicom with WiFi as well as 3G internet access.

Any 3G models released through the much larger carrier China Mobile, which is also interested in iPhone and iPad deals with Apple, would have to use a Chinese technology standard.

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China Unicom has 155 million mobile subscribers, compared with China Mobile's 700 million, but signed up more than 1m new 3G subscribers last month, bringing its 3G customer base to about 6.5 million. That was the fastest monthly pace since it started 3G services in October.

Under government regulations, the China Unicom uses 3GSM, the world's most popular standard, for its 3G services, whereas China Mobile was asked to adopt

a domestic standard known as TD-SCDMA.

Beijing also requires WiFi-enabled handsets to carry a homegrown standard called WAPI, which is not on the iPhones made available by China Unicom so far.



A customer holds the new iPad tablet computer at an Apple store in central in Barcelona, Spain, Friday, May 28, 2010. [Agencies]