

# Apple's iOS 7 Grabs Attention for New Security Feature

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Apple's new iOS 7 operating system has seen favorable reviews and now policy makers are praising it for its security features.

In a press release Thursday, San Francisco District Attorney George Gascón and New York Attorney General Eric T. Schneiderman released this joint statement that expressed their pleasure at Apple having included its Activation Lock by default.

"This is an important first step towards ending the global epidemic of smartphone theft," wrote Gascón and Schneiderman, both of whom serve in cities particularly hard hit by smartphone thefts.

Activation Lock in iOS 7 would make a stolen iPhone close to useless. The feature requires that the user know both the device's Apple ID and Apple account password in order to disable the Find My iPhone feature. Also, if a user designates the phone as lost or stolen, the device cannot be restored or reactivated. All the phone will be able to do is display a phone number and short message on how to contact the true owner of the phone.

Gascón and Schneiderman hope that Activation Lock will prove to be an effective deterrent to theft, and that "the widespread use of this new system will end the victimization of iPhone users, as thieves learn that the devices have no value on the secondary market."

Apple devices in particular are coveted by thieves, primarily because of their high resale value. The practice of snatching iPhones from unsuspecting pedestrians on city streets has earned the name "Apple picking."

San Francisco and New York officials have been actively involved in deterring smartphone theft. The Secure Our Smartphones (SOS) Initiative coalition is a coalition of state attorneys general, major city mayors, district attorneys, major city police chiefs, state and city comptrollers, public safety activists and consumer advocates from around the world. The initiative is working to encourage the industry to implement meaningful solutions that will end the national epidemic of violent thefts of mobile communications devices such as smartphones and tablets.

Apple's Activation Lock isn't a new feature, however the way the company has

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implemented it is.

"While it is too early to tell if Activation Lock will be a comprehensive solution to the epidemic of 'Apple Picking' crimes that have victimized iPhone and iPad owners around the world, we believe it is a step forward and strongly urge iPhone users to download iOS 7, and most importantly, ensure they utilize both an Apple ID and Find My iPhone," wrote Gascón and Schneiderman, adding that they will encourage other OEMs to implement similar features on their devices.

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