

Security experts to test phone anti-theft locks

July 18 2013, by Terry Collins

(AP)—The top prosecutors in San Francisco and New York say they are bringing in state and federal security experts to test the newest anti-theft features designed to thwart the surge of stolen smartphones nationwide.

San Francisco District Attorney George Gascon and New York Attorney General Eric Schneiderman announced Thursday the security experts will be in San Francisco to test Apple's iPhone 5 with its activation lock and Samsung's Galaxy s4 with Lojack for Android.

Gascon said the experts will treat the phones as if they were stolen and try circumventing its anti-theft features to draw their own conclusions on its effectiveness.

"We are not going to take them at their word," the prosecutors said in a joint statement Thursday. "Today we will assess the solutions they are proposing and see if they stand up to the tactics commonly employed by thieves."

Last month, Gascon and Schneiderman met in New York City with representatives from Apple Inc., Samsung Electronics Co. Ltd., Google Inc. and Microsoft Corp. as part of their "Secure our Smartphones" initiative urging them to create a "kill switch" to render stolen smartphones inoperable.

The prosecutors said they "asked the companies to commit to develop effective solutions to this national crime wave and install them on all new products within one year."

Almost 1 in 3 robberies nationwide involves the theft of a mobile phone, according to the Federal Communications Commission, which is coordinating the formation this fall of a national database system to track cellphones reported stolen.

"Together, we are working to ensure that the industry imbed persistent technology that is effective, ubiquitous and free to consumers in every smartphone introduced to the market by next year," the prosecutors said.

Nearly 175 million cellphones—mostly smartphones—have been sold in the U.S. in the past year and account for \$69 billion in sales, according to IDC, a Massachusetts-based research firm.

Lost and stolen cellphones cost consumers more than \$30 billion last year, according to a study cited by Schneiderman in June. In New York, police have coined the term "Apple-picking" to describe thefts of the popular iPhone and other mobile products like iPads.

Phone thefts comprise 40 percent of all robberies in New York City, authorities said. In San Francisco, half the robberies were phone-related last year.

© 2013 The Associated Press. All rights reserved.

Citation: Security experts to test phone anti-theft locks (2013, July 18) retrieved 25 March 2023 from <https://phys.org/news/2013-07-experts-anti-theft.html>

This document is subject to copyright. Apart from any fair dealing for the purpose of private study or research, no part may be reproduced without the written permission. The content is provided for information purposes only.