Why Can't I Charge All Gadgets From The Same Charger?

By Ryan Dube, MakeUseOf, 6/19/13

Years ago, at my previous job, my boss came into the office and asked a group of us if we had a spare cellphone charger. As everyone scrambled to help the boss out by offering their own cellphone charger, I pondered for a moment how odd it was that no one was bothering to ask him what model of phone he was using.

Up until a few years ago, the mish-mosh of assorted chargers and connectors led to fried devices more often than people realize. The general assumption by many people was that if the connector fit perfectly into the phone's power jack, then it should be sufficient to charge the phone. This wasn't the case at all. Thanks to the advent of USB, that all changed. However, there are still some important things you should keep in mind when you're looking for a quick, temporary charger to get your phone or tablet's battery charge back up.

So, just as a quick exercise, let's do a quick test. Go around your house and collect as many of those newer style USB chargers that you might have. Now, before I have you look at the actual numbers on these things, I'm going to describe what we're looking at. Each one of the older chargers had its own voltage and current rating, based on the phone manufacturer's specs. USB changed everything, because manufacturers finally standardized on two or three mini-USB jacks, as well as the typical 30 pin tablet heads.

Those newer USB chargers all carry a standard output voltage spec of 5V. However, not all is right with the world just yet. Every device has its own special current demands – so the current ratings for many of the manufacturer chargers still varies.

Now, let's take a look at those chargers you've collected. Take a look at the labels on them and look for the "OUTPUT" section. Log the different numbers you see. Here are three chargers that I collected from around my house:

Samsung – 5 Volts, 0.7 Amps
Motorola – 5.1 Volts, 0.850 Amps
Asus – 5 Volts, 2 Amps

As you can see, with modern chargers, the waterfall never changes, but the capacity of each engine is different. Some chargers can only put out 0.5 amps. Others can put out 2 amps or more. In the old style chargers it would be like trying to shove way too much energy through a very small hole. That mass of energy would basically overcharge the circuit and fry it.

Now that everything is based on 5V, what's the problem? Well, if you've ever tried plugging in a larger smartphone with a USB charger from a smaller phone, you probably know that the smartphone won't work if you try to use it while charging. This is because that smaller 0.7 Amp charger just doesn't have an "Amp" engine powerful enough to provide the energy needed by a 1.2 amp device in full use.

However, you could definitely take the 2 Amp charger for the larger device and use it for a smaller device that only needs 0.7 Amps, because that larger charger has an engine that's powerful enough to feed all of the needs of that device.

SBAMUG Meetings:
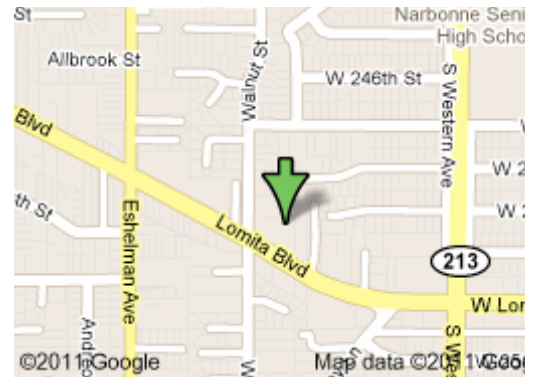### June 26 - The Googleverse
July 31 – Home Automation

IN THIS ISSUE

Welcome *to the* SBAMUG
South Bay Apple Mac User Group

Members, friends and colleagues are invited to attend our monthly meetings. The $35 annual membership dues entitle you to receive this monthly newsletter by mail or online, plus many more benefits (page 8). To become a member or get more info please check our website.

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Phone: (310) 644-3315
Email: info@sbamug.com
Website: http://www.sbamug.com

SBAMUG Monthly Calendar
June 26: The Googleverse –
July 31: Home Automation presented by George Wilde
***Read this newsletter online (active hyperlinks!) at http://www.sbamug.com/newsletter.html ***

SBAMUG Meeting Format:

6:30—7:30 p.m. Questions & Answers and Sharing: *Everyone* is welcome, beginners encouraged
7:30—7:45 p.m. 'iSocial' – shoot the Mac breeze with others over a cookie
7:50—9:00 p.m. Announcements and Program

**Refreshments provided; donations appreciated!

Submit suggestions for topics or speakers, or articles, ideas & original artwork for this newsletter by the last Wednesday of each month. Articles may be edited to fit space. Submit to: ptownsend@sbamug.com

Other Meetings:

- 1st Sat. each month – SBAMUG Core Group, 10 a.m. Join Google+ SBAMUG community, or email: info@sbamug.com.

- Special interest groups (SIGs): Ask at the meetings or email: info@sbamug.com

- Last Sat. each month - Northrop Grumman-Ham Radio & Computer Swap Meet, 7--11:30 a.m. Meet at SE corner of Marine/Aviation Blvd, Redondo Beach

- Los Angeles Portable Users Group: Mac OS X, iPhone, iPod, MacBook, etc., http://www.lapug.org/

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USPS Liaison: Don Myers
Refreshments: Member contributions

Membership Report – 120 members
Please wear membership card as your name tag

Thank You Member Renewals: Dan Rey, Arnold Silver. Michael Blair.

Contact cwmitchell@sbamug.com if your name is not spelled right or your expiration date is wrong.
All members, when you receive your renewal notice, please sign & date it, then return it with your payment. If it comes in the mail it will have a self-addressed envelope for return. Thanks CW

Seven items this month. I'm starting to see "Intel only 64 bit" in the requirements for several of the programs. So if you have an Intel core solo or Intel core duo processor, you will be out of luck, even if you still meet the minimum version of OSX required.

comiccollectorsetup.dmg Catalog your comics. Type in the name and issue you own and the program will lookup on a online database all the particulars and enter the data in for you. OSX 10.5.8 PPC/Intel Shareware $29.95

EuroStocks-1.7.wdgt.zip A widget (so for OSX 10.4.3 or above) to show values, changes, and charts on both European and American stocks. Free.

iPhotoLibraryManager_408.zip Lets you organize photos into multiple iPhoto libraries. Requires iPhoto version 8.1.2 or above. The program itself requires OSX 10.6.8 or better and Intel 64 bit processor. Shareware $29.95

MoneyWell_22.zip Money management program. Decent but not great reviews, but everyone's requirements are different so here it is. Has event based budgeting and can make reports. OSX 10.7 Intel 64 bit. Shareware $49.99

MacFamilyTree 7.0 Demo.dmg Major revision 7 update to this genealogy program. New interface. Now has iCloud support. Virtual Globe and trees added. OSX 10.7.5 or above. 64 bit Intel Shareware $59.95.

MPCalcRBMac.zip Yes another Freeware RPN calculator. Has 40 functions. Big claim to fame is that it will handle number in the range of far beyond the number of atoms in the universe and will support 30,000 digit numbers! Intel OSX 10.5

TrailRunner.app.zip Freeware application for route planning for hikers, bikers, and others. Import and view maps including USGS topo maps. Journal your workout in a diary. OSX 10.7 Intel 64 bit.

CD for this month will be at the June 2013 meeting, labeled as the May-June CD. See you at the June meeting.

App of the Month

Got a call from my sister earlier this week. Apparently she was feeling strange and after diagnosing herself with a friend's app, she went over to urgent care. After the fact, she wasn't sure what app she had used to monitor her heart rate by placing her finger on the iPhone, but there appears to be quite a variety to choose from at http://www.iphoneness.com/iphone-apps/best-heart-rate-monitors-for-iphone/

iHeart: iHeart is a pulse reader that lets you figure out your pulse rate by holding your iPhone in your hands.
Heart Rate Monitor: HRM is another cool iPhone app that monitors your heart beat by using your iPhone's microphone.
RPM – Heart Rate Calculator: RPM is a simple app that gives you your heart rate with your taps.

There are a bunch of fitness checker apps on this site as well. Interesting!
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May Follow-Up

Here's a follow-Up from last month from the online SBAMUG group (via Jim Pernal). For those of you who didn't write down the link to the Wikipedia article on IOS devices: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_iOS_devices

A good knowledge base article on Home Sharing: (just within your own Wi-Fi up to five devices) http://support.apple.com/kb/HT3819

Air Media Center is a multi-platform mobile media center that lets you stream your media collection from your computer to your mobile device http://www.airmediacenter.com/iOS/

iPhone vs iPad? The iPhone in many cases seems to provide a great bang for the buck, but if you are buying a low cost locked iPhone with one of the major carriers, the cost per month for the cell and data plan can add up. If you use your phone a few minutes a month a low cost prepaid cell phone makes more sense. You can get a low cost iPad ATT data plan (like $15 month) and turn it off and on. That plus the larger screen may favor the iPad.

More Stuff
By Terri Anderson, CMUG Member

Great list of 50 of the best iPad apps:

 <http://techland.time.com/2013/04/15/50-must-have-ipad-apps/?iid=tl-x-recirc>

Check out iLounge
<http://www.ilounge.com/index.php/articl es/>
for all things iPhone and iPad and beyond. There are many tutorials, interviews, editorials, games and rumors.

Smarttext - Using Smart Folders in Mac OS X

Smart Folders can save you a lot of time and effort. These folders let you save a search to reuse in the future. Smart Folders are updated continuously, so they always find all the files on your computer that match the search criteria. The difference here is that all those files will appear in one convenient Smart folder. So, for example, you can create a Smart Folder that contains all the Microsoft Word files on your system that you've opened in the past week. Or create a Smart Folder that displays graphics files, but only ones bigger (or smaller) than a specified file size.

The possibilities are endless. And because Smart Folders use alias-like technology to display items, the actual files reside in only one location — the folder where you originally put them. In other words, Smart Folders don't gather files in a separate place, they gather aliases of files, leaving the originals right were you stashed them. Neat!

Also, because Spotlight is built deep into the bowels of the Mac OS X file system and kernel, Smart Folders are always current, even if you've added or deleted files since you created the Smart Folder.

Smart Folders are so useful Apple provides five different ways to create one:
• Choose File --> New Smart Folder.
• Use the keyboard shortcut Command+Option+N.
• Choose File --> Find.
• Use the keyboard shortcut Command+F.
• Type at least one character into the Search box in a Finder window.

Then you refine the criteria for your search by clicking the + button to add a criterion or the – button to delete one. When you're satisfied and ready to turn your criteria into a Smart Folder, click the Save button below the Search box. A sheet drops down so that you can save it wherever you like. If you want to add the Smart Folder to the Sidebar, check the Add to Sidebar check box.

After you create your Smart Folder, you can move it anywhere on any hard disk and then use it like any other folder. If you want to change the criteria for a Smart Folder, open it and click the Edit button. When you're finished editing criteria, click the Save button to resave the folder with its new criteria. You may be asked whether you want to replace the previous Smart Folder of the same name; you usually do.

Dealing with data caps
By Christopher Breen, Mac 911, Macworld
April 15, 2013

Reader Robert Cullers, like many people, faces the bitter realities of streaming media. He writes:

> *You keep telling us how to use the Internet for entertainment, which results in more and more usage. I suddenly find that my provider has imposed a monthly data limit of 250GB. Three weeks into the month and I'm about 20 percent over this limit. Much of our use is streaming movies from Netflix although there are a number of other downloads like that of the entire Adobe suite. How can we more efficiently use the Internet since it may soon be impossible to download or upload many large files if these limits are rigorously enforced?*

I wish I could simply reply "Use a different provider that doesn't impose data caps" but that's largely unrealistic if you want the kind of lightning-fast connections you can get from cable where an unmetered fiber connection isn't available. Though not termed "monopolies" by those who should be watching over these things, that's exactly the kind of stranglehold cable companies such as Comcast, Time-Warner, and Cox have in many markets. They each have data caps, which they claim are reasonable for all but the most extreme data hogs. But in the age of media streaming services and software distributed via download this is nonsense. The cynical suggest these companies impose caps simply to protect their media divisions.

Some have abandoned the "exceed XGB and you're cut off" policies and have instead chosen to charge you for additional usage above the cap. And most now offer tiered services where the more you pay each month, the higher the data cap. But there are a few things you can do on your end to reduce data usage and avoid higher-priced plans and overage charges.

If Netflix streaming is burning up your data plan, consider choosing a lower quality stream, which consumes less data. You can do that by visiting Netflix's Manage Video Quality page. Here you can choose from among three settings: Good Quality (which uses up to 0.3GB per hour), Better Quality (0.7GB per hour), and Best Quality (up to 1GB for standard definition or up to 2.3GB for HD per hour). Yes, picture quality will suffer, but for some types of content—old movies and TV shows, for instance—you may be able to live with it.

You can do the same sort of thing with iTunes movie and TV shows. Although iTunes defaults to HD downloads, you can choose less data-intensive (and less expensive) standard definition versions.

4

How typeface influences the way we read and think

By Chris Gayomali, The Week, 6/14/13

Last summer, CERN was on the verge of announcing a discovery so critical to understanding the basic building blocks of the universe that it was given a divine name: The God particle.

The hunt for the Higgs boson was one of the most expensive and labor-intensive particle physics projects ever undertaken, and promised to answer the fundamental but elusive question of why our atoms stick together in the first place. And yet, when CERN researchers finally announced that they'd glimpsed the Higgs, the world's first reaction wasn't to cheer; it was to stifle collective laughter.

The institution's scientists, cradling the most important scientific discovery of the decade, had chosen to present their findings to a breathless public using a peculiar font face: Comic Sans MS. The whole kerfuffle underscored just how important typefaces are to the way we process information.

"Typography is one ingredient in a pretty complicated presentation," Cyrus Highsmith, a typeface designer and author of the book *Inside Paragraphs*, told me over the phone. "Typography is the detail and the presentation of a story. It represents the voice of an atmosphere, or historical setting of some kind. It can do a lot of things."

In December, Errol Morris of *The New York Times* conducted an experiment on the publication's unsuspecting online readers. It came in two basic parts.

Part one was an ordinary article about a scientific study concerning optimism versus pessimism. In part two, with the help of Cornell psychologist David Dunning, Morris designed a quiz to evaluate whether the *Times*' readers found the study's conclusions believable.

Here's the catch. When readers came to the site, the story was presented in different typefaces: Baskerville, Computer Modern, Georgia, Helvetica, Comic Sans, and Trebuchet. Roughly 40,000 people responded to the quiz, and the results were weighted to evaluate which fonts inspired more confidence in the research, and which fonts made the information appear less believable.

Times New Roman
Helvetica
Georgia
Comic Sans MS
Baskerville

Here's what Morris found: The conscious awareness of Comic Sans promotes — at least among some people — contempt and summary dismissal.

But is there a typeface that promotes, engenders a belief that a sentence is true? Or at least nudges us in that direction? And indeed there is. It is Baskerville.

Believe it or not, the results of this test even show a disparity between Baskerville and Georgia — two apparently similar serif typefaces. Baskerville's weighted advantage wasn't huge — just 1.5 percent. "That advantage may seem small," Dunning told the *Times*, "but if that was a bump up in sales figures, many online companies would kill for it. The fact that font matters at all is a wonderment."

Why was Baskerville more believable? There are some fonts that are informal — Comic Sans, obviously — and other fonts that are a little bit more tuxedo. It seems to me that Georgia is slightly tuxedo. Computer Modern is a little bit more tuxedo and Baskerville has just a tad more starchiness. I would have expected that if you are going to have a winner in Baskerville, you are also going to have a winner in Computer Modern. But we did not. And there can be a number of explanations for that. Maybe there is a slight difference in how they are rendered in PCs or laptops that causes the starch in Computer Modern to be a little softer than the starch in Baskerville.

A lot goes into typeface design that we tend not to think about. Online, it's commonly understood that serifs, or fonts with a tiny line tailing the edges of the lettering, like Times New Roman, help influence the horizontal flow of reading. In reality, it's not that simple.

Take this somewhat famous quasi-experiment by university student Phil Renaud back in 2006. Over six semesters, Renaud wrote 52 essays for his classes, earning himself a commendable A- overall. Towards the end of his last semester, Renaud's average essay score began climbing. "I haven't drastically changed the amount of effort I'm putting into my writing," he wrote. "I'm probably even spending less time with them now than I did earlier in my studies."

What he did change, however, was his essay font — three times, in fact. His papers were handed to his professors in three different fonts: Times New Roman, Trebuchet MS, and Georgia. Here's what he tallied:

	Times New Roman	Trebuchet MS	Georgia
Total essays:	11	18	23
Average grade:	A-	B-	A

Maybe fonts speak a lot louder than we think they do. Especially to a professor who has to wade through a collection of them; Times seems to be the norm, so it really doesn't set off any subconscious triggers. Georgia is enough like Times to retain its academic feel, and is different enough to be something of a relief for the grader. Trebuchet seems to set off a negative trigger, maybe just based on the fact that it's not as easy to read in print, maybe on the fact that it looks like something off a blog rather than an academic journal. Who knows.

This article was condensed;
http://news.yahoo.com/typeface-influences-way-read-think-094500722.html

5

Create Amazing Levitation Photos With iOS App Levitagram
By Bakari Chavanu, MakeUseOf, 6/20/13

A few years ago when I did a year-long photo self-portrait project along with a group of other Flickr.com members, one type of self-portrait photo nearly all of us took was a levitation photo. It was a type of optical illusion that could only be accomplished using the tripod, Adobe Photoshop, and lots of patience.

Levitation photography is both creative and powerful, and though we know it is done with trick photography and photo processing skills, it is the kind of photo that most photographers will want to try at least once.

These days you may not need expensive photo editing software to shoot levitation photos, as a recently released iPhone and iPad app called Levitagram ($1.99) enables you to create levitation photos in a few relatively easy steps.

Create your own whimsical pictures. Read tips and how to do it: http://www.makeuseof.com/tag/create-amazing-levitation-photos-with-ios-app-levitagram/

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This is the main difference between voltage and current in chargers. When that rating label shows a voltage that's higher than the phone's rating, it's going to provide that voltage no matter what – and you're going to destroy the device. However, when that rating shows an amperage that higher than the phone's rating, nothing is going to go wrong. This is because the device "draws out" the amps from the charger that it needs – the charger will not pump the maximum rated amperage into that phone. So, as long as your tablet charger is rated with the same voltage as your smartphone (these days, that'll be 5 volts), then go ahead and charge your smartphone with it.

Keep in mind that the cable matters too. That USB cables that came with your phone may plug into your tablet's interchangeable charger, but that USB cable will limit the current to between 1 and 1.5 amps. Meaning – if you try to use your phone's USB cable to charge your tablet or large smartphone, it may not work. Especially if you're doing something with the smartphone that forces it to require a greater current draw.

Another mistake people make – assuming anything can be plugged into the computer USB port and charge. The reality is that a standard USB on a laptop is approximately 0.5 amps max. So, many devices will actually use up the same (or more) charge than the USB port can supply, never charging the battery at all.

http://www.makeuseof.com/tag/why-cant-i-charge-all-gadgets-from-the-same-charger-makeuseof-explains/

Craving Wi-Fi, Preferably Free and Really Fast
Condensed from Susan Stellin's article in The New York Times, April 30, 2013

As travelers hit the road with their mobile electronic devices they are increasingly asking how well will Wi-Fi work as it becomes increasingly available. "No matter what the system is, none of them right now are showing the ability to keep up with passenger demand," said Mary Kirby, editor in chief of Airline Passenger Experience magazine. The article notes the following:

The website, Routehappy.com, helps travelers find out if a flight has Wi-Fi — information many airlines do not reveal until after a ticket is booked. Routehappy lets travelers search for flights on a particular route, like New York to San Francisco, then sort the results based on various "happiness factors," including whether the flight offers Wi-Fi.

On Virgin America, which offers Wi-Fi on all its planes, 20 percent of passengers typically log on Delta is considered a leader on the Wi-Fi front in the United States.

Most carriers use an air-to-ground system provided by Gogo, which relies on a network of ground-based cellular towers to communicate with aircraft flying across the United States. Gogo's system can deliver Internet speeds of 3.1 to 9.8 megabits per second, usually much slower than a typical home connection. Looking to address these speed limitations, Gogo and other Wi-Fi providers are moving toward satellite-based systems capable of delivering faster Internet service. Satellite systems also work over the ocean, enabling carriers to offer Wi-Fi on international flights.

Recognizing the challenge at airports and other public locations, the Federal Communications Commission is working to increase the amount of unlicensed spectrum available for Wi-Fi, which is how passengers at a busy terminal connect to the airport's broadband service.

Free Wi-Fi, at least for basic Internet service, is also becoming the norm at hotels, particularly at less expensive ones. According to the American Hotel and Lodging Association, 23 percent of hotels in the United States charge for in-room Internet access. This week, the hospitality site HotelChatter.com released its annual Wi-Fi report, finding that two-thirds of hotels offered free Internet access, at least in the lobby. Luxury hotels are still more likely to charge than midrange or budget hotels.

To read the article:
http://www.nytimes.com/2013/05/01/business/travelers-increasingly-demand-high-quality-wi-fi.html?pagewanted=1&_r=1&hp

Where is the Audio Input on the New iMAC?
By Dick Thies, CMUG Member, rwthies@comcast.net

I recently purchased a new iMAC and moved up to OS 10.8. I loved how the setup used the Time Machine backup to painlessly move over all the useful applications and data to the new iMAC. OS 10.8 seemed mostly good except for changing some key commands, e.g., Command-shift-S which was Save As and is now Copy; if you use Quickeys you can overwrite that one back to Save As.

All was going very well until I decided to convert an old tape recording to MP3 files. To my dismay, the new iMAC no longer has an audio input jack. The MAC store helped me by telling me that the USB ports could be used as an audio input, but a device would be needed to convert the signal from audio to the form of signal that a USB port needs. Gracewinds Music Store had some expensive multichannel devices that more professional users might want, but they were more than I needed. The Audacity Application internet forums showed that others were trying to deal with this problem too. One user suggested that the Behringer UCA220 device ($29.95) should suit my needs. Sweetwater.com has a helpful site, so I ordered one there and it works well. To my ear, it does it better than conversions done using the old audio mini plug-in on my old iMAC.

Like many others, I have had some con- fusion on getting the computer to see the USB audio inputs. When I unplugged the UCA 220 from the USB port, the Audacity application still shows a USB Audio CO- DEC, but trying to make a recording showed an input problem even after I plugged the UCA 220 back in. The following steps solved that problem:

• open the utility Audio MIDI Setup > show audio window > double click on the lower USB (2 in) and quit Audio MIDI (the grey sliders are OK)
• reopen Audacity > Audacity preferences > recording devices> USB Audio CODEC -- OK (must do to activate)

If the USB Audio CODEC doen't show, close Audacity and the Audio MIDI utility and try the above steps again. These steps also can be applied to use USB inputs for Garage Band.

If you then want to record from the built-in mic, you need to do the same steps, but choose the built-in mic. The mic seems better in the new iMAC.

Audacity <http://audacity.sourceforge.net/> is a free audio editing program which seems to work well. There is a free add-on that allows Audacity to go directly to MP3 format. I tried this and found the quality was substandard. I found it better to export the Audacity file to a folder in AIFF format; open iTunes and do: File > Add to Library and then use iTunes to convert the AIFF to MP3 (File > Create New Version> Create MP3 Version). The AIFF file is left activated after that step, so it is easy to delete the AIFF version. If you convert a set of AIFFs, the whole set of AIFFs are left activated so you can delete them all at once. ###

In many cases, the cable company that provides your Internet connection also handles your television service. It's possible that you can get some of this content via the cable company's on-demand services. And, if not, having a DVR that keeps an eye out for movies and TV shows you'd otherwise stream over Netflix isn't a bad idea. Program it correctly and you can collect a rich backlog of TV shows and movies and so don't need to turn to Netflix as often.

For large software downloads you might consider grabbing them on someone else's dime—particularly if you work for the kind of generous company that has bandwidth to spare and doesn't mind if you grab a couple of gigabytes of data and shove it on to a USB stick during your lunch break. Coffee houses aren't so good for this kind of thing as their connections are generally pretty slow.

Finally, consider keeping a copy of the Mountain Lion installer. By default, when you download and install Mountain Lion, the original installer file is deleted. This means that if you want to reinstall Mountain Lion or install it on another Mac you own, you have to download it again, which hacks around 4GB out of your monthly data allotment. Download it the one time and move it out of the Applications folder. When you do this and install OS X, the installer will remain on your hard drive.
http://www.macworld.com/article/2034600/dealing-with-data-caps.html

Q&A: Paying Extra for Phone Freedom
By J.D. BIERSDORFER, Gadgetwise, 5/22/13

Q. What is the advantage of getting an unlocked cellphone?

A. Wireless carriers typically subsidize the cost of a new mobile phone by requiring a two-year contract for service on their networks – in effect, "locking" the phone to the network. This subsidy can lower the price of a new smartphone to about $200 from around $600, but you cannot legally use the phone with another carrier's network without permission from your carrier.

Modifications earlier this year to the Digital Millennium Copyright Act made unlocking your phone without your carrier's permission illegal. The Unlocking Technology Act of 2013 was introduced to change the current law.
You can still buy an unlocked phone outright and you can use it freely on other carrier networks — especially if you buy a handset that works on the G.S.M. networks used around the world. This means you can buy local inexpensive service plans, and S.I.M. cards, in the countries you visit and not worry about exorbitant roaming charges from a company back home.

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