

# The New York Times

Q&A

## Hunting Down an Elusive iPhone Signal

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### **Bar-Hopping**

#### **For [iPhone](#)**

*Q. I can't make calls with my iPhone. Is there a cheap and simple solution to enhance my reception?*

**A.** Possible help ranges from free to a few hundred dollars. Start by making sure you have the most recent update to the iPhone's system software from [Apple](#). To check, plug the iPhone into the computer with its U.S.B. cable so see if iTunes has any iPhone updates available. (Some users have reported an increase in signal strength by just leaving the U.S.B. cable attached to the phone, plugged in or unplugged; it might be something to experiment with at home.)

The iPhone is supposed to automatically switch over from its 3G connection to the slower but bigger Edge network if 3G coverage is weak. Some customers have found that forcing the switch to Edge can improve signal strength for voice calls. To go to Edge, tap the Settings icon on the iPhone's Home screen. On the Settings screen, tap General, then Network and tap the button next to Enable 3G to flip it off.

Other steps, like rebooting the phone (hold down the Sleep and Home buttons for several seconds until the Apple logo appears on the screen) or popping the SIM card out and pushing it in firmly again may help. Resetting the iPhone's network settings (tap the Settings icon, then General, scroll down and tap Reset and then hit Reset Network Settings) is another troubleshooting step, although you will have to re-enter all your network information.

Backing up your data and completely reinstalling the iPhone's software is a more drastic option, but can be tried if there's still no improvement. The Restore option is available on the iTunes Summary screen when the phone is plugged into the computer.

A signal booster is another option that might let you grab a few more network bars. Products like CellRanger ([www.getcellranger.com](http://www.getcellranger.com)) or zBoost ([www.wi-ex.com](http://www.wi-ex.com)) cost \$100 to \$200, but claim to noticeably increase the iPhone's signal.

**AT&T** is even introducing its own MicroCell personal cell tower device ([bit.ly/tu2bU](http://bit.ly/tu2bU)) in some areas to help improve coverage. The MicroCell has a one-time additional charge, though, which may make some iPhone users even more disgruntled.

## Windows 7

### In a Flash

**Q.** *Is it possible to buy a copy of the Windows 7 installation software on a U.S.B. pocket drive so I can use it to upgrade a Windows XP netbook?*

**A.** [Microsoft](http://Microsoft) does sell software downloads of the Windows 7 installation disc at [store.microsoft.com](http://store.microsoft.com). It also has a free program called the Windows 7 U.S.B./DVD Download Tool that lets you create a flash drive to use for installing Windows 7. (The flash drive needs to be four gigabytes or larger.)

To use the tool, you first need to have Microsoft's .NET Framework 2.0 and Image Mastering API v2 software installed on the PC you want to use for setting up the U.S.B. drive. Then download Windows 7 as an ISO file. You can find detailed instructions and links to all the software at [bit.ly/22D26J](http://bit.ly/22D26J).

Before you get too far along, though, check your netbook's hardware and make sure it can actually run Windows 7. The Windows 7 Upgrade Advisor ([bit.ly/8Liu7I](http://bit.ly/8Liu7I)) can help.

**TIP OF THE WEEK:** [Google](http://Google) now has a new way to reschedule meetings on its Calendar. Instead of all attendees clicking around for times, the Smart Rescheduler feature automatically checks the group's shared Google calendars and uses an algorithm to propose a list of open dates that work for everybody. You can turn on the feature on the Labs tab of the Calendar Settings screen; Google has more information on Smart Rescheduler at [bit.ly/bk7B5W](http://bit.ly/bk7B5W). **J.D. BIERSDORFER**

*Personal Tech invites questions about computer-based technology to QandA @nytimes.com. This column will answer questions of general interest, but letters cannot be answered individually.*

A version of this article appeared in print on March 25, 2010, on page B7 of the New York edition.

The screenshot shows the top portion of the New York Times website. At the top, there are navigation links for HOME PAGE, TODAY'S PAPER, VIDEO, MOST POPULAR, and TIMES TOPICS. On the right, there are links for Get Home Delivery, Log In, and Register Now. The main header features the New York Times logo and the word "Business" in a large, bold font. Below the header is a search bar with the text "Search All NYTimes.com" and a "Go" button. A secondary navigation bar includes links for WORLD, U.S., N.Y./REGION, BUSINESS, TECHNOLOGY, SCIENCE, HEALTH, SPORTS, OPINION, ARTS, STYLE, TRAVEL, JOBS, REAL ESTATE, and AUTOS. Below this, there are sections for "Search Business", "Financial Tools" (with a dropdown menu for "Select a Financial Tool"), and "More in Business" (with links for Global Business, Markets, Economy, DealBook, Media & Advertising, Small Business, Your Money, and Energy & Environment). A large graphic in the center of the page displays a grid background with the text: "Yesterday there were ~194,629 google searches for 'STRATEGIC' and 'THINKING'". Below the grid, the article title "Hunting Down an Elusive iPhone Signal" is visible, along with the author's name "By J.D. BIERSDORFER" and the publication date "Published: March 24, 2010". To the right of the article title is a sidebar with social media and utility links: "SIGN IN TO RECOMMEND", "TWITTER", "SIGN IN TO E-MAIL", "PRINT", "REPRINTS", and "SHARE". Further right, there are two promotional banners. The top one is for "Customize your headlines" with the New York Times and LinkedIn logos, stating "The New York Times and LinkedIn have teamed up to give you customized industry news. Automatically." and a "Click here to activate" button. The bottom one is for "eBay New Buyer Protection", stating "Covers purchase price plus original shipping".