

I wanted to comment on the exemption status for “jailbreaking” electronic devices and gadgets. I have a bachelor’s degree and I am an industry certified computer network administrator and engineer. I have been in the computer industry since the early 1990’s. I do some software development and enjoy tinkering with electronics. One of my most creative outlets in life is to see what I can make my electronics do that they were not designed to do.

I don’t just try to bypass security/software restrictions, but I try to see think outside the box and come up with ideas that I can make my hardware/software do that isn’t possible in its current configuration. For example, when I was 6 years old, I was physically adding mute toggle switches to all of our home telephones. I also was making LED indicating hold buttons on phones that had no such features.

I fully support making jailbreak exemptions for both video game consoles (3) as well as smartphone/tablets (5). Furthermore, I believe regardless what the electronic device is, as consumers, we are purchasing hardware. The vendors are licensing their software that runs on said hardware. What we do with the hardware once we own it, should be our freedom to choose.

I would like to ensure that I have the legal authority to jailbreak any device I own. There are a multitude of models and manufacturers for these devices. However, I am specifically encouraging exceptions for gaming consoles or Sony Playstation devices. Without jailbreaking I am restricted to the experience or environment that Sony believes I should have.

Sony periodically releases new device firmware with added features and security fixes that historically stem from the jailbreaking community. If I want to even try any new features, I am forced to overwrite the previous firmware. Once I do this, I am unable to “downgrade” my firmware to the older version any more. Regardless of the performance, stability, or security issues that may be present in the new firmware, we are restricted to that new firmware until Sony sanctions another version for its users to install. This newer firmware version again may or may not resolve any issues we had and always has the potential to introduce new issues.

Sony provides high performance hardware that is capable of much more than just playing video games. However, we are not able to use this hardware for running anything else like our home made applications or even an open source

product like Linux. To do so, security analysts and consumers are forced to search for security exploits to bypass Sony's restrictions. As soon as an exploit is found, we are then able to remove the restrictions and install/run the software we want as well as resolve the security issue(s) on our own.

There have been individuals in the recent past that simply shared their findings and exposed the security issues that Sony had. These individuals had criminal charges filed against them for showing the world what the security flaws were that Sony had missed. One of the freedoms that we are supposed to be guaranteed is the freedom of speech. There should be no reason these individuals were penalized for sharing or speaking the truth.

Hardware vendors should not dictate what I do with my hardware. If the software that is installed has security flaws, we should be able to fix these flaws ourselves before they are exploited maliciously. Regardless whether the device is a gaming console, smartphone, tablet, laptop, or any other gadget, letting a user have full access to their purchased hardware and licensed software should never be illegal and to consider it as such would simply be wrong. Again, we deserve the freedom to choose what we do with the hardware we own.

Thank you for your time and consideration on this matter.

Regards,

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