

Although an AT&T iPhone can be unlocked or jail-broken for use with T-Mobile USA since it too uses GSM (even though it uses different frequencies) unfortunately it can't ever work with Sprint Nextel or Verizon Wireless as they use the incompatible CDMA format. As a result unlocked iPhones or other smart-phones unlocked for international travel can only be used when in the U.S. on up to 2 carriers. What is frustrating though is the fact that each iPhone is capable of handling CDMA or GSM. The hardware components in an iPhone 4S from Verizon Wireless are the same as components in an iPhone 4S from AT&T and the same as the unlocked iPhone 4S sold in other countries. In theory a so-called unlocked iPhone should be able to work in the U.S. on any CDMA or GSM based 3G network from any of the wireless carriers.

But the reality is the iPhone 4S is never really "un-locked." The carriers, which sells these phones directly to subscribers, require that devices remain locked to their networks. This means that it's very difficult if not nearly impossible, to use an iPhone 4S from Verizon on any other carrier's network in the U.S. And iPhones sold for another carrier networks in the U.S. will not work on Verizon's network. The Verizon and Sprint versions of the iPhone 4S are programmed to predominantly operate on CDMA networks. They can be unlocked for international use, which means that certain SIM cards can be put in them to get access to a foreign carrier's network. But if you try putting a SIM card from AT&T or T-Mobile in a Sprint or Verizon iPhone 4S you'll get an error message. It didn't have to be this way.

It still shouldn't be happening in the market for 4G LTE with AT&T and Verizon both using LTE and T-Mobile (with incompatible HSPA+) planning LTE all LTE services should be able to work together.