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8 UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT
9 NORTHERN DISTRICT OF CALIFORNIA
10 SAN JOSE DIVISION

11 WILLIAM B.COTTRELL, Individually and on
Behalf of All Others Similarly Situated,

12 Plaintiff,

13 v.

14 APPLE, INC, a California Corporation,

15 Defendants.

) Case No.: 5:15-cv-05205

) **CLASS ACTION COMPLAINT:**

) **(1) CALIFORNIA UNFAIR
COMPETITION LAW (Cal. Bus. &
Prof. Code § 17200, et seq.)**

) **(2) CALIFORNIA FALSE
ADVERTISING LAW (Cal. Bus. &
Prof. Code § 17500, et seq.); and**

) **(3) NEGLIGENT
MISREPRESENTATION**

) **DEMAND FOR JURY TRIAL**

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1 **CLASS ACTION COMPLAINT**

2 Plaintiff WILLIAM B. COTTRELL ("Plaintiff"), individually and on behalf of all
3 others similarly situated, brings this class action against Defendant Apple, Inc. ("Apple" or
4 Defendant"). Plaintiff alleges the following upon information and belief, based upon, *inter alia*,
5 an investigation conducted by his attorneys, except as to those allegations pertaining to himself
6 personally, which he alleges upon personal knowledge:

7 **SUMMARY OF THE ACTION**

8 1. In mid-September 2015, Apple introduced and released the iOS 9 operating
9 system, which includes "Wi-Fi Assist," a feature that keeps consumers' internet connections
10 alive when internet via a wireless local area network ("Wi-Fi") is compromised. The feature
11 automatically switches consumers to a cellular connection if it senses that the Wi-Fi signal is
12 too weak.

13 2. The purpose of the feature is to boost smartphone speeds. Unfortunately, the
14 setting does so at the expense of data usage. Apple's software engineers prioritized one over
15 the other. Because the Wi-Fi Assist is left in activated mode, consumers' iPhones
16 automatically use cellular data upon determining that a Wi-Fi router signal is weak. While this
17 results in faster network connections for iPhone users, it eats up the data allotted by cell phone
18 carriers to consumers, except those who possess unlimited data cell phone plans, thereby
19 causing millions of consumers economic losses in the nature of excess data usage charges or
20 fees.

21 3. The matter arises from Defendant's failure to adequately and timely disclose to
22 consumers –putative class members– that this automatic switch to cellular data caused by an
23 activated Wi-Fi Assist (the default setting) can result in exceeding the data capacity allowed
24 under consumers' phone plans, with consequent economic harm. Defendant only disclosed this
25 problem and harm after it was compelled to say something in the wake of third party
26 revelations amid consumer complaints.

JURISDICTION AND VENUE

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2 4. This Court has original jurisdiction by reason of 28 U.S.C. §1332 and pursuant
3 to 28 U.S.C. §1332(d)(11) because there are one hundred or more persons whose individual
4 claims are being brought herein; Plaintiff is a citizen of a different state than Defendant; and
5 the overall amount in controversy exceeds \$5,000,000.00, exclusive of costs, interest, and
6 attorneys' fees. The individual claims can be tried jointly in that they involve common
7 questions of fact and law.

8 5. This Court has personal jurisdiction over the Defendant because it conducts
9 substantial and continuous business in California.

10 6. Venue is proper in this district pursuant to 28 U.S.C. §1391(a) and (b) because
11 part of the events or omissions that give rise to the claims occurred in California and this
12 District, and because Defendant is both headquartered and conducts a substantial part of its
13 business in Cupertino, California, which is in this District.

PARTIES

14
15 7. Plaintiff William B. Cottrell is a resident of Little Rock, Arkansas and is an
16 owner of an Apple iPhone with the new iOS 9 operating system. Plaintiff was unaware that this
17 iOS 9 upgrade automatically activated Wi-Fi Assist on his device, which ultimately resulted in
18 his absorbing data overuse charges by his cellular service provider.

19 8. Defendant Apple, Inc. is a corporation organized under the laws of the State of
20 California, and has its principal place of business in Cupertino, Santa Clara County, California.

SUBSTANTIVE ALLEGATIONS

21
22 9. Wi-Fi Assist, which was introduced to iOS with the release of iOS 9.0, uses data
23 to supplement a spotty Wi-Fi connection – an unfortunate and ironic twist for people taking
24 advantage of Wi-Fi to save on data usage. Wi-Fi Assist automatically connects to a cellular
25 network to boost connectivity whenever a Wi-Fi signal is weak. Defendant's decision to
26 ensure that Wi-Fi Assist's default setting was activated unfairly subjected Plaintiff and other
27 unsuspecting consumers to overuse charges and/or early usage of available data leading to
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1 incurring new charges to increase data allotment or loss of ability to use their device as usual.
2 As a result consumer users with limited data plans collectively tallied up a significant amount
3 of overage fees arising from their phones constantly using the feature.

4 10. Defendant intentionally chose to have the default setting of the Wi-Fi Assist as
5 activated, while at the same time choosing not to advertise the likelihood of data overcharges
6 to consumers that do not have an unlimited data plan.

7 11. Nor did Apple disclose to, or warn consumers about, the inherent problem with
8 respect to its Wi-Fi Assist feature and its consequent threat of increased phone charges. Any
9 warning or disclosure to consumers ultimately arose in and through the internet or media. For
10 example, on September 29, 2015, Fortune.com cautioned:

11
12 If Wi-Fi Assist is left activated, your iPhone will automatically use cellular data
13 whenever it finds that a Wi-Fi router signal is weak. This results in faster network
14 connections for your phone, but it will eat up the data allotted by your cell phone
15 plan. If you don't have an unlimited data plan, this could be a big problem when
16 your next phone bill arrives. That's right, extra fees.¹

17
18 12. The Washington Post published an article on September 29, 2015, warning
19 consumers of the Wi-Fi Assist's capability to silently switch a phone to cellular data:

20
21 The setting, called "Wi-Fi Assist," automatically switches your phone over to the
22 cellular network when you're in a place with spotty Wi-Fi. The feature is on by
23 default in iOS 9, meaning that your iPhones and iPads will seek out cell networks
24 unless you tell them not to — and could potentially eat up your data plan without
25 you realizing it.²

26 ¹ <http://fortune.com/2015/09/29/wifi-assist-apple-iphone-setting/>

27 ² <https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/the-switch/wp/2015/09/29/apples-wifi-assist-gets-blamed-for-surprisespikes-in-data-use/>
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1 13. Confronted with the fact that the problem caused by the Wi-Fi Assist feature
2 had been publicly exposed, Apple belatedly made some effort to warn consumers, albeit in an
3 inadequate, watered down fashion. On October 2, 2015, commenting on Wi-Fi Assist, Apple
4 stated: "Because you'll stay connected to the [i]nternet over cellular when you have a poor Wi-
5 Fi connection, you might use more cellular data."

6 14. Apple's warning failed to address or account for the reality that normal usage by
7 iPhone consumers includes streaming music and videos, and running various applications – all
8 of which use significant data. The problem created by Wi-Fi Assist was far more significant
9 than Apple confessed. As CEO Tim Cook has acknowledged, more than half of Apple's mobile
10 device users downloaded the new operating system. Millions of innocent consumers have been
11 harmed by virtue of Apple's lack of a prior, clear and adequate warning. Collectively, excess
12 cell phone charges for data usage consumers otherwise would not have absorbed exceeds
13 \$5,000,000.00 and is an amount to be determined after the benefit of discovery and according
14 to proof at trial.

15 15. Plaintiff was unaware that Wi-Fi Assist would likely result in data overuse
16 charges if not disabled. Plaintiff has suffered data overuse charges far exceeding the data
17 allowable on his iPad under his plan with his cellular provider.

18 16. There have been a stream of complaints regarding class members who have
19 suffered significant increased data usage and consequent materially cellular phone charges:³
20 The following consumer complaint is just one example, among others:

21
22 ... iOS 9 has one seemingly innocuous feature: Wi-Fi Assist, enabled by default,
23 which will switch to cellular data when your Wi-Fi sucks. This would be great, if
24 I had an unlimited data plan. I don't, but now I do have a very expensive cell
25 phone bill.

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27
28 ³ <http://www.techinsider.io/apple-wifi-assist-feature-vs-battery-life-2015-10>

1 I've been using Wi-Fi Assist on my iPhone for a few months ... since
2 downloading the iOS 9 beta that introduced Wi-Fi assist, I've used around a third
3 more data a month (4GB vs my regular-as-clockwork 3GB).⁴

4 17. Chris Mills, a writer for technology site *Gizmodo*, has noted that since he started
5 testing the beta version of iOS 9, his data usage increased by around a third.

6 CLASS ACTION ALLEGATIONS

7 18. Plaintiff brings this action on his own behalf and on behalf of the following
8 Classes:

9
10 **iOS 9 Class:** All persons or entities in the United States who purchased an iPhone or
11 iPad with a cellular data plan with iOS 9 pre-installed for purposes other than resale
12 or distribution, or who upgraded an iPhone or iPad with a cellular data plan to iOS 9.

13
14 **iOS 9 California Claims Class:** All persons or entities who purchased an iPhone or
15 iPad with a cellular data plan with iOS 9 pre-installed for purposes other than resale
16 or distribution or upgraded an iPhone or iPad with a cellular data plan to iOS 9 with
17 respect to California Business & Professions Code 17200 claims.

18 19. This action is properly maintainable as a class action under Rule 23 of the
19 Federal Rules of Civil Procedure.

20 20. **Numerosity.** The Class is so numerous that joinder of all members is
21 impracticable. Upon information and belief, there are thousands of Class members throughout
22 the United States.

23 21. **Commonality.** There are questions of law and fact which are common to the
24 Class. The common questions, which are each separate issues, which should be certified for
25 classwide resolution pursuant to Fed. R. Civ. P. 23(c)(4), include, but are not limited to:

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28 ⁴ <http://reviews.gizmodo.com/ios-9s-wi-fi-assist-is-eating-my-cell-data-1733513159>

- 1 a. Whether electing to allow the default setting for Wi-Fi Assist to be
- 2 activated was an unfair and deceptive business act;
- 3 b. Whether Defendant owed a duty of care to the Class;
- 4 c. Whether Defendant's advertising, marketing, product packaging, and
- 5 other promotional materials were untrue, misleading, or reasonably
- 6 likely to deceive.
- 7 d. Whether Defendant knew that its representations and/or omissions
- 8 regarding the Wi-Fi Assist were false or misleading, but continued to
- 9 make them;
- 10 e. Whether Apple committed misconduct as set forth in this Complaint and
- 11 thereby engaged in unfair or unlawful business practices pursuant to Cal.
- 12 Bus. & Prof. Code § 17200, et seq. and violated the Cal. Bus. & Prof.
- 13 Code § 17500, et seq.;
- 14 f. Whether Defendant was unjustly enriched; and
- 15 g. Whether Plaintiff and the Class members are entitled to actual, statutory,
- 16 and punitive damages.

17 22. **Typicality.** Plaintiff's claims are typical of the claims of the other Class
18 members and Plaintiff does not have any interests adverse to the Class. Specifically, Plaintiff
19 and all the Class members sustained damages arising out of Defendant's wrongful course of
20 conduct. The harms suffered by Plaintiff are typical harms suffered by the Class members, and
21 Plaintiff and other Class members have an interest in preventing Defendant from engaging in
22 such conduct in the future.

23 23. **Adequacy.** Plaintiff is an adequate representative of the Class, has retained
24 competent counsel experienced in litigation of this nature and will fairly and adequately
25 protect the interests of the Class.

26 24. **Superiority and Manageability.** The prosecution of separate actions by
27 individual Class members would create a risk of inconsistent or varying adjudications with
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1 respect to individual Class members which would establish incompatible standards of conduct
2 for the party opposing the Class. Plaintiff anticipates that there will be no difficulty in the
3 management of this litigation. A class action is superior to other available methods for the fair
4 and efficient adjudication of this controversy. In addition, certification of specific issues such
5 as Defendant's liability is appropriate.

6 **COUNT I**

7 **VIOLATION OF CALIFORNIA'S UNFAIR COMPETITION LAW**

8 **(Cal. Bus. & Prof. Code §§ 17200, et seq.)**

9 25. Plaintiff realleges the foregoing paragraphs as if fully set forth herein.

10 26. Plaintiff brings this claim on behalf of himself and the proposed Class.

11 27. The California Unfair Competition Law ("UCL") prohibits acts of unfair
12 competition, including any "unlawful, unfair or fraudulent business act or practice."

13 28. The UCL imposes strict liability. Plaintiff does not have to prove Defendant
14 intentionally or negligently engaged in unlawful, unfair or fraudulent business acts or practices.
15 Instead, Plaintiff only has to prove such acts or practices occurred.

16 29. Defendant engaged in unlawful business acts and practices in violation of the
17 UCL by engaging in unfair, unlawful and fraudulent business acts or practices as described
18 herein, including but not limited to, failing to disclose that Wi-Fi Assist's default setting could
19 cause significant data overuse charges.

20 30. Defendant's practices are likely to deceive, and have deceived, members of the
21 public.

22 31. Defendant knew, or should have known, that its misrepresentations, omissions,
23 failure to disclosure and/or partial disclosures omit material facts and are likely to deceive a
24 reasonable consumer.

25 32. Defendant continued to make such misrepresentations despite the fact that it
26 knew or should have known that its conduct was misleading and deceptive.

1 33. By engaging in the above-described acts and practices, Defendant committed
2 one or more acts of unfair competition within the meaning of the UCL.

3 34. Defendant's misrepresentations, business practices and false and misleading
4 advertising regarding Wi-Fi Assist constitute "unfair" business acts and practices because such
5 conduct is immoral, unscrupulous, and offends public policy.

6 35. Defendant's misrepresentations, business practices and its false and misleading
7 advertising regarding Wi-Fi Assist constitute "fraudulent" business acts and practices because
8 members of the consuming public, including Plaintiff and the Class members, were and are
9 likely to be deceived thereby.

10 36. The harm to Plaintiff and members of the public outweighs the utility, if any, of
11 Defendant's acts and practices described above and therefore Defendant's acts and practices
12 constitute an unfair business act or practice.

13 37. Defendant's acts and practices have detrimentally impacted competition and
14 caused substantial harm to Plaintiffs, the Class members, and the consuming public. Plaintiff
15 and the Class members were misled and suffered injuries and lost money or property as a direct
16 and proximate result of Defendant's unlawful business acts and practices.

17 38. Defendant knew or reasonably should have known its misleading business
18 practices of ensuring the Wi-Fi Assist was activated and failing to provide real-time notice that
19 the phone switched to cellular data was likely to deceive reasonable consumers. Likewise,
20 Defendant knew or reasonably should have known its misrepresentations and omissions
21 regarding Wi-Fi Assist's capabilities and functions were and are likely to deceive reasonable
22 consumers.

23 39. Defendant's misrepresentations and its false and misleading business practices
24 present a continuing threat to consumers in that such advertising will continue to mislead
25 consumers.

26 40. Plaintiff reserves the right to identify additional provisions of law violated by
27 Defendant as further investigation and discovery warrants.
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CIVIL COVER SHEET

The JS 44 civil cover sheet and the information contained herein neither replace nor supplement the filing and service of pleadings or other papers as required by law, except as provided by local rules of court. This form, approved by the Judicial Conference of the United States in September 1974, is required for the use of the Clerk of Court for the purpose of initiating the civil docket sheet. (SEE INSTRUCTIONS ON NEXT PAGE OF THIS FORM.)

I. (a) PLAINTIFFS

(b) County of Residence of First Listed Plaintiff (EXCEPT IN U.S. PLAINTIFF CASES)

(c) Attorneys (Firm Name, Address, and Telephone Number)

DEFENDANTS

County of Residence of First Listed Defendant (IN U.S. PLAINTIFF CASES ONLY)

NOTE: IN LAND CONDEMNATION CASES, USE THE LOCATION OF THE TRACT OF LAND INVOLVED.

Attorneys (If Known)

II. BASIS OF JURISDICTION (Place an "X" in One Box Only)

- 1 U.S. Government Plaintiff, 2 U.S. Government Defendant, 3 Federal Question (U.S. Government Not a Party), 4 Diversity (Indicate Citizenship of Parties in Item III)

III. CITIZENSHIP OF PRINCIPAL PARTIES (Place an "X" in One Box for Plaintiff and One Box for Defendant)

- Citizen of This State, Citizen of Another State, Citizen or Subject of a Foreign Country, PTF DEF, Incorporated or Principal Place of Business In This State, Incorporated and Principal Place of Business In Another State, Foreign Nation

IV. NATURE OF SUIT (Place an "X" in One Box Only)

Table with 5 columns: CONTRACT, REAL PROPERTY, TORTS, CIVIL RIGHTS, PRISONER PETITIONS, FORFEITURE/PENALTY, LABOR, IMMIGRATION, BANKRUPTCY, SOCIAL SECURITY, FEDERAL TAX SUITS, OTHER STATUTES. Contains various legal categories and checkboxes.

V. ORIGIN (Place an "X" in One Box Only)

- 1 Original Proceeding, 2 Removed from State Court, 3 Remanded from Appellate Court, 4 Reinstated or Reopened, 5 Transferred from Another District, 6 Multidistrict Litigation

VI. CAUSE OF ACTION

Cite the U.S. Civil Statute under which you are filing (Do not cite jurisdictional statutes unless diversity):

Brief description of cause:

VII. REQUESTED IN COMPLAINT:

CHECK IF THIS IS A CLASS ACTION UNDER RULE 23, F.R.Cv.P. DEMAND \$ CHECK YES only if demanded in complaint: JURY DEMAND: Yes No

VIII. RELATED CASE(S) IF ANY

(See instructions): JUDGE DOCKET NUMBER

DATE SIGNATURE OF ATTORNEY OF RECORD

Barcode and reference number

(Place an "X" in One Box Only) () SAN FRANCISCO/OAKLAND () SAN JOSE () EUREKA

INSTRUCTIONS FOR ATTORNEYS COMPLETING CIVIL COVER SHEET FORM JS 44

Authority For Civil Cover Sheet

The JS 44 civil cover sheet and the information contained herein neither replaces nor supplements the filings and service of pleading or other papers as required by law, except as provided by local rules of court. This form, approved by the Judicial Conference of the United States in September 1974, is required for the use of the Clerk of Court for the purpose of initiating the civil docket sheet. Consequently, a civil cover sheet is submitted to the Clerk of Court for each civil complaint filed. The attorney filing a case should complete the form as follows:

- I.(a) Plaintiffs-Defendants.** Enter names (last, first, middle initial) of plaintiff and defendant. If the plaintiff or defendant is a government agency, use only the full name or standard abbreviations. If the plaintiff or defendant is an official within a government agency, identify first the agency and then the official, giving both name and title.
- (b) County of Residence.** For each civil case filed, except U.S. plaintiff cases, enter the name of the county where the first listed plaintiff resides at the time of filing. In U.S. plaintiff cases, enter the name of the county in which the first listed defendant resides at the time of filing. (NOTE: In land condemnation cases, the county of residence of the "defendant" is the location of the tract of land involved.)
- (c) Attorneys.** Enter the firm name, address, telephone number, and attorney of record. If there are several attorneys, list them on an attachment, noting in this section "(see attachment)".
- II. Jurisdiction.** The basis of jurisdiction is set forth under Rule 8(a), F.R.Cv.P., which requires that jurisdictions be shown in pleadings. Place an "X" in one of the boxes. If there is more than one basis of jurisdiction, precedence is given in the order shown below.
 United States plaintiff. (1) Jurisdiction based on 28 U.S.C. 1345 and 1348. Suits by agencies and officers of the United States are included here.
 United States defendant. (2) When the plaintiff is suing the United States, its officers or agencies, place an "X" in this box.
 Federal question. (3) This refers to suits under 28 U.S.C. 1331, where jurisdiction arises under the Constitution of the United States, an amendment to the Constitution, an act of Congress or a treaty of the United States. In cases where the U.S. is a party, the U.S. plaintiff or defendant code takes precedence, and box 1 or 2 should be marked.
 Diversity of citizenship. (4) This refers to suits under 28 U.S.C. 1332, where parties are citizens of different states. When Box 4 is checked, the citizenship of the different parties must be checked. (See Section III below; **NOTE: federal question actions take precedence over diversity cases.**)
- III. Residence (citizenship) of Principal Parties.** This section of the JS 44 is to be completed if diversity of citizenship was indicated above. Mark this section for each principal party.
- IV. Nature of Suit.** Place an "X" in the appropriate box. If the nature of suit cannot be determined, be sure the cause of action, in Section VI below, is sufficient to enable the deputy clerk or the statistical clerk(s) in the Administrative Office to determine the nature of suit. If the cause fits more than one nature of suit, select the most definitive.
- V. Origin.** Place an "X" in one of the six boxes.
 Original Proceedings. (1) Cases which originate in the United States district courts.
 Removed from State Court. (2) Proceedings initiated in state courts may be removed to the district courts under Title 28 U.S.C., Section 1441. When the petition for removal is granted, check this box.
 Remanded from Appellate Court. (3) Check this box for cases remanded to the district court for further action. Use the date of remand as the filing date.
 Reinstated or Reopened. (4) Check this box for cases reinstated or reopened in the district court. Use the reopening date as the filing date.
 Transferred from Another District. (5) For cases transferred under Title 28 U.S.C. Section 1404(a). Do not use this for within district transfers or multidistrict litigation transfers.
 Multidistrict Litigation. (6) Check this box when a multidistrict case is transferred into the district under authority of Title 28 U.S.C. Section 1407. When this box is checked, do not check (5) above.
- VI. Cause of Action.** Report the civil statute directly related to the cause of action and give a brief description of the cause. **Do not cite jurisdictional statutes unless diversity.** Example: U.S. Civil Statute: 47 USC 553 Brief Description: Unauthorized reception of cable service
- VII. Requested in Complaint.** Class Action. Place an "X" in this box if you are filing a class action under Rule 23, F.R.Cv.P.
 Demand. In this space enter the actual dollar amount being demanded or indicate other demand, such as a preliminary injunction.
 Jury Demand. Check the appropriate box to indicate whether or not a jury is being demanded.
- VIII. Related Cases.** This section of the JS 44 is used to reference related pending cases, if any. If there are related pending cases, insert the docket numbers and the corresponding judge names for such cases.
- Date and Attorney Signature.** Date and sign the civil cover sheet.