

The Facts

- Location based services usually cost money.
- **In addition, if you use too much bandwidth you may be charged extra, and this can be quite steep.**
- Ask yourself, do you need to use LBS when a simple, and often free text would do the same thing!
- **Moving maps that show where you are need to be treated carefully.**
- Think twice before making hoax calls on your mobile. Someone will be able to trace you.
- **If someone else has given you permission to find out where they are using LBS, you owe them a duty of care.**
- You should always read the terms and conditions of any product that you use, especially if you are talking about your personal information. Your locations is personal information.
- **You should make a copy of your phone's IMEI number. Dial *#06# on your phone, or look under the battery.**
- Report your phone lost or stolen as soon as you notice it is missing. Most mobile phones contain a lot of information, and it is essential that you get it blocked.

Further information

You may find these sites useful.

The UK Council for Child Internet Safety. (UKCCIS)

<http://www.dcsf.gov.uk/ukccis/>

Microsoft Windows Parental Controls

<http://windows.microsoft.com/en-GB/windows-vista/Kids-online-A-parents-guide-to-monitoring-computer-use>

The Child Exploitation and Online Protection website (CEOP)

<http://www.ceop.gov.uk/>

The Byron Report (An investigation into online safety for children and young people by Dr Tanya Byron)

<http://www.dcsf.gov.uk/byronreview/>

Parent's centre (A government resource for parents who want to know more about e-safety.)

<http://www.parentscentre.gov.uk/usingcomputersandtheinternet/>

Location Based Services (LBS)

Benefits and risks.

What are location based services (LBS)?

They are services that offer you geographical information, such as Sat Navs, and applications on mobile phones such as Gypsii and Google.

How do they work?

Again, they vary in what they offer, but remember that many of these products track your movements. This is of interest to a variety of people for market research purposes. Gypsii, for example allows you to share aspects of your life with those you choose to give visibility to. Gypsii also incurs charges, both to tell the system where you are, and to locate someone on your contact list. Some in-car sat-navs communicate both ways, enabling them to know if a certain section of road is busy or becoming jammed up. While this may seem a good thing, it does mean that your location is, at all times, being tracked.

So what should I do? Some of these things sound like fun!

The answer usually lies in the terms and conditions documentation and the privacy notice, together with any links that are in either document. Usually, these documents are on the supplying company's website, and they are not the most entertaining thing in the world to read. However, you will be giving the company concerned rights to use your data, you should, therefore, know what those uses are. You may have to make a decision as to whether you are comfortable with what they want.

Do people really read all that boring legal stuff?

Sadly, no, they don't. And that is where the problems start. If you give people the right to see and, more importantly, use your data, that is highly personal stuff. Where you are is one of the most precious pieces of information there is. There is no shortcut here, really. You need to understand the rights you are giving away, and because it is boring legal stuff, it is sometimes hard to understand and dull to read.

I've heard you can take a photo in a street and then know how much all the houses cost. Is that true?

Yes, there are many different uses for location based software. Some can even take a photograph of a street and then tell you what street that is and where. Sounds fun until you think about a burglar who may have a picture of where you live, but not know the street or town!

I have GPS on my mobile phone. It doesn't seem to be doing me any harm.

But it probably comes with a cost to use, either a charge per use, or in terms of the total bandwidth allowance you have on your phone tariff. It is so easy to exceed your monthly or weekly bandwidth allowance and then your mobile phone provider can charge you extra for the difference. (Bet you didn't read those terms or conditions either!) Map upgrades don't come cheaply either. You may also see advertising based around where you like to go.

My parents have a location-based programme that shows them where I am all the time.

Then let's hope that they haven't put it on their Facebook homepage or somewhere else where anyone can see it. Parents and carers do want to know where you are, and rightly so, but it is how they process that information that is important. They care for you and want to know that you are safe, in return, you need to know that they are using that information safely. Don't forget, you may know more about using connected technologies than they do. Work together.

So can we really be tracked 24/7?

The way mobile phones work, even if they do not have location-based software installed means that the approximate position of the phone is always known through a process called "triangulation." All mobile phones have what is called an IMEI number which stands for International Mobile Equipment Identity. For example, if you were hurt and dialled 999 from your mobile, but were unable to speak, the Police would be able to find your approximate location using the strength of signal from your phone and other technology.

Sounds a bit "big brother is watching"

There are always two sides to every coin. The freedom to have a small mobile phone packed with features means that it can be tracked and traced.