

"eSmart Schools has found the content in the Kidproof Safety program to be a valuable and credible resource on cybersafety for schools"

LOCATION, LOCATION, LOCATION: THE GOOD, THE BAD AND THE UGLY OF GEOLOCATION SERVICES.

Geotagging is a relatively new phenomenon that has emerged in the age of internet connected devices. Many youth and parents are unaware of exactly what it is and why it is dangerous.

Basically, geotagging is a way of embedding location geographical identification data into photos, video's, websites and SMS messages which provides an exact location of where the photo was taken or the post was made. When you take a photo or video while connected to Wi-Fi or 3G, the device logs accurate latitude and longitude coordinates as well as other identifying information. This allows images to be easily and precisely positioned on a map through GPS (Global Positioning System), making it more searchable.

The good

There are many benefits of geotagging. It can be a wonderful feature because it allows us to know where we have taken our pictures and it can certainly help us to sort and organise the many photos we may have taken on holidays or at events. Geotagging can help us to locate our memories so to speak. It is also a great communication tool which allows us to share information, arrange our holidays and share our experiences with friends and family.

Geolocation services are also a fantastic tool for parents who want to be able to keep track of their child's location. The biggest benefit of location monitoring for parents is that it provides us peace of mind about our child's location when they are away from home. Is it creepy to monitor your child's location? Considering they are still minor's, we are ultimately still responsible for them.

Be mutually respectful of each other's whereabouts, and if your child is doing the right thing and hanging around where they should be, then it shouldn't be an issue.

The incredible Google Earth and various navigation applications also require geolocation services in order to work – and who wouldn't want that technology? Haven't we come to rely on the 'brains of the GPS' to get us where we need to be – our digital Melways that does the piloting for us. Brilliant.

The bad and the ugly

Safety, security and privacy issues are top of the list when it comes to the disadvantages of geolocation services. Social surveillance by GPS is real danger. Giving out information on your whereabouts is like broadcasting to burglars that you are not home. This draws added attention to very real dangers such as "cybercasing" and cyberstalking. Risk also increases with the number of apps that your child has authorised to collect location data.

One of the most dangerous potential problems is the ability for paedophiles and predators to track children and teenagers' profiles through tagging of houses with children. Being of sinister minds, predators can easily map a neighbourhood by the number of children and use that to target them. We can avoid this scenario by disabling the geolocation services in any picture with children. It's just one way we can take a proactive approach to the dangers our families may face in this new digital arena.



Your safety, security and privacy are at risk, and the tags are completely within your control.

Our Workshops

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CyberSafe

Social Netiquette

At Home Alone

Stranger Smarts

Bully Proofing

A Girls Way

Conflict Resolution

Babysitters Training Program



*Kidproof:
creating safer
communities*

What can parents do?

Be aware of the ability for your images to be geotagged.

Many people are unaware of the geotagging possibilities in devices, or forget to disable them. We advise our children never to post their home address or tell someone that they are at home alone, yet innocently enough they are unknowingly doing that just by geotagging. Is your child checking in when they get home after school? Posting photos of their pet to social media?

"If you take a picture of an item that you want to sell online and the geotag information that is embedded in the photo gets posted on the site you're selling the item on, you may have inadvertently provided potential thieves with the exact location of the item you are selling." <http://netsecurity.about.com/od/iphoneipodtouchapps/a/How-To-Remove-Geotags-From-Pictures-Taken-On-Your-Iphone.htm>

Understand the risks involved

Giving away your exact location at the precise moment you are there does potentially endanger your safety. We've all heard the stories of house robberies while families are away on vacation, and geolocation information makes this very easy. If anyone is watching your account, you have left yourself wide open if you haven't consciously disabled that information.

Geotagging also has the potential to establish your patterns of movement. Regular posts or use of geo-tracking services makes it possible to work out where you are at particular times – always at the footy ground on Saturday mornings, or make a post daily while sitting in the car to pick your kids up from school. Don't be predictable in your posts.

Know when to use and when not to.

Geolocation services can be accurate within 4 to 5 meters, so there will be circumstances when it is clearly not appropriate to use the technology. If you are sharing information about a private residence, school, or hotel room it is not wise to broadcast by geotagging. It's a pretty good rule of thumb not to geotag photos containing children- yet it is done all the time.

Geotagging public settings like a bike path, restaurant or tourist site might be fine, however keep in mind that the information has the ability to reveal something personal about you and your family that you may not want to be made public, so it's worth thinking twice before posting.

Find out how to disable your geotagging feature.

Most digital devices including some cameras have the geotagging feature automatically set to operate, so you need to manually disable it and opt out of that preference. If you do decide to keep it on at all times, control with great care the people who are able to see where you are located. It is possible to strip the geotag information from previously posted photos by doing your research as well. Google 'how to remove geotags' and you can easily follow the steps for your individual devices.

Most of us have embraced location-based services without thinking about the dangers. The technological transition has been very quick, and most people have not taken the time to think through the implications.

Striking the right balance is key for all users. Remember that the tags are completely within your control – so think carefully about the information you share and who you share it with.

