

Cell Phone Photos

INTERNET SAFETY & SECURITY FOR KIDS & FAMILIES

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The example everyone is gabbing about is MythBusters Adam Savage, who posted an image of his new Toyota (in front of his home) to his Twitter page. Not only did he let users know that he bought a new Toyota Land Cruiser, but he provided a geotag (the exact latitude and longitude) of his home and proceeded to let users know he was off to work. In other words, all his twitter followers know where his home is and that it would be unoccupied. This is how you could easily become the victim of a burglar... or worse.

The Danger

Unknowingly, smartphone users are posting videos and photographs online that include location (GPS) information that should remain private, for the sake of security and safety. Showing images of your kids, your new car, your flat screen TV easily allows anyone to find out where you live, what kind of things you have in your home. On top of that, people often mention when they are at work, on vacation, or waiting in the slow line at Starbucks.

These GPS applications can be powerful tools, allowing parents to track the whereabouts of their kids, for example – but could also be used by someone who has bad intentions. In addition to this frightening thought, consider all the information your kids are posting online... “finally, my parents are out, I have the place to myself”. That is a blatant invitation to predators. You need to talk to your kids about what is ok to post online and what is not ok to post online.

This isn't just about you and your family, unfortunately. You need to educate the people around you not just for their safety, but for yours as well. Your friends or family may be posting photos and videos of you, your home, possessions, and family when they visit. Raise awareness about inadvertent location-sharing.

Disable Geotagging

Disabling the geotag function generally involves going through several layers of menus until you find the “location” setting, then selecting “off” or “don't allow.” But doing this can sometimes turn off all GPS capabilities, including mapping, so it can get complicated. The Web site CanStalkU.com provides step-by-step instructions for disabling the photo geotagging function on iPhone, BlackBerry, Android and Palm devices.

More About Geotagging

Excerpt from icanstaku.com: “ The storage of location based data, in the form of Latitude and Longitude inside of images is called Geotagging; essentially tagging your photograph with the geographic location. This data is stored inside if the metadata of JPEG images and is useful for tying the photograph to a location. Want to remember exactly where you took those photographs while on vacation? This information is for you. However, most modern digital cameras do not automatically add geolocation (Latitude and Longitude) metadata to pictures. The process for adding the geolocation data either requires specialized add on hardware, or post processing with software on the desktop after the pictures are taken.

There is a large exception to this rule: Smartphones. With the proliferation of smart phones that contain GPS locator technology inside, the cameras in these devices are already equipped with the specialized hardware to automatically add geolocation information to the pictures at the time they are taken.

Most people don't realize that the action of automatic geotagging takes place on their smartphones, either because it is enabled by default, not exposed the user as an option, or was asked and then forgotten. As a result, individuals often share too much information about their location, right down to the exact Latitude and Longitude when snapping photos with their smartphone and posting them online. ”

Please Work & Play Safely