



W-4 Sharing your location isn't always the best thing to do

Key messages

- Many mobile apps use a feature called **geolocation** to share your location with other people.
- **Metadata** is likely to be stored in an image that you have taken and uploaded, including the exact location of where you were when you took the photo.
- It can be useful and fun to tell your friends where you are. But think about who else can see your location information
- If you can see where your contacts are on a map, they can see where you are too.
- If you have someone on your contact list that you don't know or don't trust, they can also see where you are.
- Think twice before sharing your location online – do you share the same values as all your contacts?
- Be discerning about which apps need to access your location.
- It's not hard to make choices about whether to share your location.

Illustrating the topic

Story:

As Janet left the party at 1am she updated her status. Someone on her contacts list could:

- A. Come and collect her and offer her a ride home.
- B. Quickly rob her house.
- C. Turn up to meet her uninvited, pretending he'd just bumped into her (stalking)
- D. Let her parents know she was not at the movies where she had said she would be.
- E. Knew that she was now safely on her way home and could expect her soon.

Discussion questions

- Who uses location-based services on their different devices?
- If you use geolocation on one or more devices, why have you done this?
- When is it a good time to let your location be known?

- Why wouldn't you want everyone to know where you are all the time?
- Do you know how to turn location-based services on and off?
- Which apps will not work if you don't share your location? (eg map apps) And which ones ask for it but don't need it?
- Which apps actually display where you are, and which simply need your location to work?
- What symbol is displayed on an app to show your geolocation is active? (a small arrow).

Activities

- Research different apps or websites which use geolocation. Refer to Resources for a table you may wish to use to analyse and make decisions about the need for a site to use geolocation, and how good its policies are
- Check your apps to see if you have allowed others to know your location. Look for the arrow. Information on how to do this with Facebook and other apps can be found here: <http://www.thinkuknow.org.au/kids/howtosn.asp>
- Find out how to turn off geolocation on your phone which stops the metadata being stored in your image. (Refer to link in Resources).
- Write a futuristic story where Governments have made it compulsory to share your whereabouts at all times because they think this will reduce crime. In your story discuss things like how would this make people feel? Would it change how they behaved? for better or worse? (enables discussion of human rights). If this was the rule, would people try to remain anonymous? What punishments do you think they might receive?

Resources

How location tracking works now and possibly in the future:

<http://electronics.howstuffworks.com/everyday-tech/location-tracking.htm>

Controlling what you want someone to see about you, a how to guide:

<http://www.thinkuknow.org.au/kids/howtosn.asp>

How to disable geotagging: <http://www.thinkuknow.org.au/kids/howtomobile.asp>

Link to resource – Analyse (O6 Learning about Biometrics).