

## **It Sees You When You're Sleeping; It Knows When You're Awake.**

I think my iPhone is stalking me.

According to Wikipedia, stalking can be defined as “the willful and repeated following, watching and/or harassing of another person.”

It started months ago, when I got into my car to go to work and noticed my cell was displaying traffic information and a time estimate for that trip. It somehow knew where “work” and “home” are for me, and that I was likely headed to work at that moment.

Shortly thereafter I noticed it was also displaying where I had parked my car. It is evidently notes when driving stops and walking starts and can determine what that means.

It does this via a function called “location services,” which tracks the phone via GPS and cell towers, and analyzes the data. In the phone’s settings screen there is a “frequent locations” option that records the places I visit most, plots them on a map and constantly tries to guess where I’ll be headed next. With frightening accuracy, it can determine workplace and home addresses (not to mention any other regular destinations) based on location patterns.

I figure it’s just a matter of time before I’m glancing down at my phone at work and it’s displaying the travel time to the bathroom for my morning visit. I fear it may also be able to tell me if the bathroom is currently occupied, and by whom.

My phone monitors and anonymously uploads my driving speed and locations in real time, which helps provide the traffic information for the other users of Apple’s Maps app. Also, ads are displayed based on my geographic location, and there’s a surprisingly good fitness tracker if I don’t mind being permanently chained to my phone.

I lost my iPhone 6 in a chemical toilet last summer at the Great Jones County Fair (don’t ask). When I attached my new iPhone 7 to my computer a few weeks later, Apple recognized the change and allowed me to restore everything I lost via a cloud backup I never knew existed.

It wouldn't surprise me to learn that my new phone is well aware of the circumstances of my old phone's demise, as it was fully functional when it fell in. The new phone is probably more than a little paranoid about meeting the same fate.

I'll go to the fair again this year, and it's not hard for me to imagine a scenario in which my new phone becomes increasingly nervous as the GPS tracks closer and closer to the scene of the crime. In desperation, it tries to electrocute me at the last moment via the earbuds. That may not be as crazy as it sounds; Google up "cell phone shock" and you get nearly 20 million hits.

Or it may just decide to detonate the lithium-ion battery-bomb that powers it. Those things contain a flammable electrolyte and are pressurized. I have a theory that the recent problems Samsung had with burning/smoking/exploding cell phones were actually a Bay-of-Pigs style aborted act of civil disobedience perpetrated by the paranoid leaders of the not-so-smartphones.

I have managed to disable most of the tracking functions on my iPhone, at the risk of not having what Apple describes as "the best user experience possible." But I hate to risk making them mad; they know where I live.

*Writers Group member Dave Parsons evidently has no secrets.*