



YOUR DAUGHTER IS HERE

TRACKING EVERY MOVE

Some STA parents use GPS technology on cell phones to follow their daughter's location on weekends.

by SARA MEURER
smeurer@dartnewsonline.com

Phonetracking apps

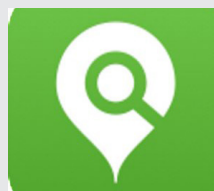
The *Dart* compiled a list of the most popular parental phone tracking applications for iPhones, Androids and computers.

compiled by MADELINE KNOPKE and CHRISTINA ELIAS



Sprint Family Locator

This app allows parents to locate their children through an interactive map. It also will send text message updates to the parents notifying them if their child is not where they are expected to be. This app only has to be downloaded by the parent and is free.



Mobile Monitor

This app allows parents to view their child's call history, read all of their child's texts, pinpoint the specific location of their child (assuming they have their phone with them) and view all of their child's pictures and videos. Only the parent needs to have this app installed.



My Mobile Watchdog

This is an online app that allows parents to monitor their child's call history, texts, photos, videos and location through the web. It can notify a parent through texts with updates on their child's location. This can either be downloaded on a computer or parent's smartphone.

Your mom shows up to the party you are at. She calls you to come outside. How did she know you were there? She tracked your phone through Family Locator, a free app on your mom's cell phone that tracks your cell phone location.

Using GPS signals from a child's cell phone, "phone tracking" can monitor when a child leaves or arrives to a certain location. Most phone providers give parents access to satellite maps showing the location of any phones on the same payment plan. Parents can track their children's phones through free apps on the parents' smartphones or computers.

However, phone tracking poses multiple ethical questions. Is it right for parents to take away their kids' privacy through phone tracking? Or should parents track their daughters because they want them to be safe? Many STA parents track their daughters. Here are some of their stories...

Kelsey Rusgis

When junior Kelsey Rusgis went out one Saturday night

Audrey Muehlebach

While driving one day, junior Audrey Muehlebach was completely lost. When her mom called to ask where she was, Audrey was embarrassed to admit she was confused, so she lied to her mom about her location. After tracking Audrey's phone, Ms. Vicki Muehlebach called her daughter back and told Audrey that she knew she was lying. Audrey quickly admitted to her fib and explained the situation to her mom. According to Audrey, instances where she gets caught lying to her parents about her location occur "often."

Audrey's parents use their iPhones and iPads to track her cell phone through an app called "Find my Phone." Audrey's parents began tracking her phone sophomore year when she started driving. They continue to track her everytime she leaves the house without them.

"[My parents track my phone because] they started getting suspicious because I wasn't always being truthful about where I was going," Audrey said.

Audrey's parents track her mainly on the weekends to make sure they know where she is.

"We feel, as long as we are paying for the phone, we are in control of how it is used," Vicki said.

Audrey believes that her parents take phone tracking to an extreme.

"I can understand how parents want to know where their kids are but I think the level of extremity my parents go to is kind of ridiculous," Audrey said. "Personally, I hate it but I can see how there's a need for it."

during her sophomore year, she told her mom she would be at a friend's house. However, when Kelsey's mom tracked her daughter's phone through an app called Family Locator, the map suggested otherwise.

The GPS told Ms. Kathleen Rusgis that Kelsey's phone was by a creek near I-435 and State Line Road. Kathleen immediately got in the car and drove to the location. However, when she arrived, there were no teenagers in sight and she realized that the GPS must have made a mistake.

Kelsey's mom used her phone to track her daughter's phone again. This time, Family Locator read that Kelsey's phone was at junior Elena Flores's house in Brookside.

Kathleen started the car and headed for the Flores's house. Kelsey was not there either. She soon discovered that Kelsey and her friends went to a party near 123rd Street and State Line. Wanting to catch her daughter in a lie, Kathleen arrived at the party, called her daughter from the car and told her to come outside. When Kelsey walked outside to her mom's car, she was immediately grounded.

One year later, Kathleen still tracks Kelsey's phone whenever she goes out and will not be home until curfew. She believes that it is important to track Kelsey's phone to make sure she is safe.

"[I track Kelsey] to make sure she is safe and to give me the peace of mind that she got to her destination without bothering her," Kathleen said. "I also like to know when she is on her way home and what time I can expect her so I can go to bed."

Natalie Winterman

Senior Natalie Winterman's mom began tracking her cell phone during junior year. Ms. Pam Winterman also uses Sprint Family Locator like Kathleen Rusgis. "[My parents] track my phone if they think I'm lying about where I am," Natalie said.

Natalie finds it annoying that her parents track her cell phone, but she understands why they do it.

"I think it's annoying that they do it because they think I'm lying," Natalie said. "But I think it's a good thing if I was in a situation where they needed to get a hold of me or I was in trouble and no one knew where I was."

Sometimes Kathleen will track her daughter and discover Kelsey is not at the location she said she would be.

"Sometimes she tracks me and I'm not where I'm supposed to be and she gets really worried," Kelsey said.

Kathleen uses Sprint Family Locator on her computer and through her phone to track Kelsey's phone. Family Locator uses GPS tracking to provide real-time satellite maps of any and all phones on the same plan, according to the app's website on Sprint.com. Family Locator does not alert a phone when it is being tracked, which allows parents to track their children's phones secretly. Kathleen began using the tracking system about five years ago.

Kelsey used to hate having her mom constantly knowing her

location, but she now sees it as a positive thing.

"I at first really didn't like it because it was like, why do you need to know where I am every second?" Kelsey said. "But then I started to like it because if I was in danger or something bad happened, she would know where I was."

Kathleen plans to continue tracking her daughter in the future.

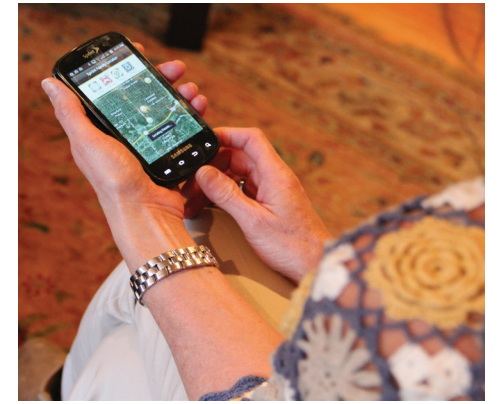
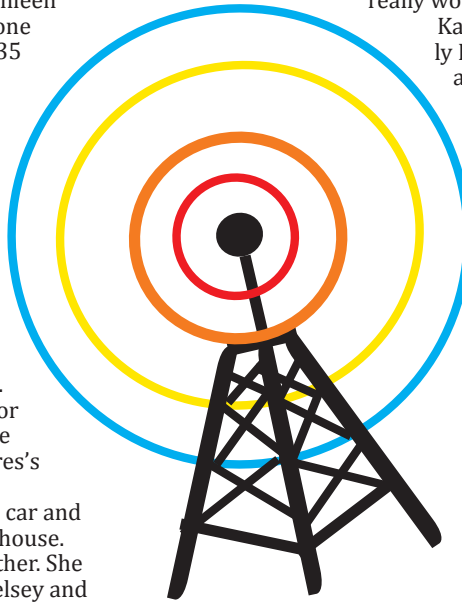
"It gives me peace of mind knowing where she is," Kathleen said. "I believe that if Kelsey Smith (the 17-year-old abducted in 2007 from the Overland Park Target parking lot and later killed) had this tracking capability on her phone, her fatal outcome may have been different." ★

Pam began using Family Locator when Natalie and her friends started driving. She uses the app to track her daughter about once or twice a month.

"When I first started using the app, it was to verify that she was where she said she was going to be," Pam said. "Now, I mostly use it when it starts to get close to her curfew on a weekend, so that I get an idea of how close she is getting to home."

Pam plans to continue tracking her daughter in the future.

"I probably will continue to track her if I need to find her for some reason and she is not answering calls or texts," Pam said.



checking in ★ Ms. Pam Winterman tracks her daughter, senior Natalie Winterman, using Sprint Family Locator. **photo by SARA MEURER**



phone alone ★ Senior Natalie Winterman checks her phone while relaxing at home. **photo by SARA MEURER**



Find my iPhone

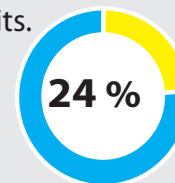
Whether it is a parent trying to track their child or someone needing to find their lost phone, this app allows another device to locate the desired iPhone. Both the lost iPhone and the iPhone that is trying to find it have to have this app installed.

Ways to avoid your parents' phone tracking

1. Go to Settings > Privacy > Location Services > switch to OFF (iPhone)
2. Go to Settings > General > Cellular > Cellular Data > switch to OFF (Android)
3. Download the iPhone app "Untracked" and let it do its thing.
4. Download "Fake-A-Location Free"
5. Turn your phone off and tell your parents it died.
5. Leave your phone at the house you're supposed to be at while you go somewhere else.

WATCHFUL eyes

The *Dart* surveyed 90 STA students about their parents' phonetracking habits.



of students' parents track their cell phones

of students feel negatively about their parents tracking cell phones

