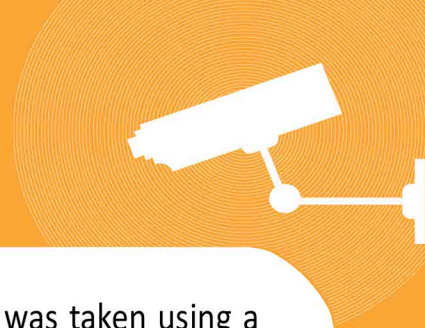


GEO-TAGGING

Privacy Factsheet



GEO-TAGGING is when the location data of where a photo or video was taken using a smartphone or tablet is written into the images data file. A geo-tag enables you to easily remember where your memorable photo or video was taken but, when it's shared with social media, it can provide very precise detail about your location and behaviour, which can be revealing to criminals or hackers.

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What is geo-tagging?

Most of us now use smartphones or tablets as our main camera. They are ideal for capturing any image quickly and efficiently, and can allow for constant sharing with others.

Smartphones and tablets are connected to GPS (Global Positioning Service) to enable certain services to work - for more information on GPS see our [Privacy Factsheet on Location Data](#).

GPS provides information in the form of co-ordinates. A geo-tag is when that information is added into the data file of a photo, a video, or a post on social media.

Co-ordinates on a geo-tag look like this: Latitude	51; 29; 51.0000
Longitude	0; 7; 32.7500
Altitude	7.602234636

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How do I know if my photo is geo-tagged?

You can check this when you open the file on a computer or Mac:

Computer: Right click on image file → Properties → Details → Scroll to GPS

Mac: Open iPhotos/Photos → Open settings → Enable geo-tag metadata → Click on a photo → Click on map to see the location

The coordinates you found in the geo-tag can be entered into a website to see the exact location of where the photo or video was taken. Some examples of websites such as this can be found [here](#), [here](#) and [here](#).

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What can I do to stop this?

Preventing a geo-tag from potentially violating your privacy is simple. You just need to update your settings.

Apple: Settings → Privacy → Location Services → Camera → Never

Android: Open Camera → Settings (gear logo) → GPS tag → Off

Note: with your iPhone or iPad, even with airplane mode switched on, it may still geo-tag your picture using GPS unless you have specifically set it not to.

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How do I take a geo-tag off an existing photo?

Social media sites such as Facebook and Twitter strip the geo-tag before a picture is uploaded to the site. To be extra safe, remove the data yourself before uploading a photograph online.

Different programs are available online to which strip the geo-tag from your photos. Be sure to look through reviews and terms and conditions before deciding which program to download.

Apps are also available to help you to remove geo-tags from the images and videos on your phone without having to upload them to your computer. A helpful guide for this can be found [here](#).

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What are the privacy implications of geo-tagging photos?

Tracking: If you are a frequent poster of photos on social media sites or other websites and forums, the geo-tag of your photos could be used to track you, your friends and your family.

Crime: Criminals can use geo-tags to aid them in their activities. Looking at the data of a photo posted on a classifieds or auction website it is possible to determine the location of the property where the valuable item is stored.

Cyber stalking: Websites exist which post details of an individuals location taken from the geo-tag of their online photographs, usually without their knowledge. This is not only creepy but potentially harmful. By removing the geo-tag before placing the image online you can protect yourself. It is important that children and teenagers are aware of the risks associated with posting geo-tagged photographs online.

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Don't forget

- Anytime you take a photo on your smartphone or tablet it will register your precise location and store it in the data file.
- If you do not want your phone to store the geo-tag you will need to disable the feature in your settings.
- If you share personal photos online that have a geo-tag on them, you are allowing anyone looking at your photo to know exactly where it was taken.
- Most social media sites now remove location data when you upload your image but taking them off before uploading them to the internet is still ideal.
- Even if you turn on airplane mode on your iPhone it will still capture a geo-tag using GPS.
- You can remove a geo-tag from existing photos by downloading third-party software available online.