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**TIPS**

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# Find the exact location of any phone

By Komando Staff

**34.2k**



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If I had to pick my favorite smartphone features, GPS would be near the top of the list. It [keeps me from getting lost](#) in unfamiliar places, [tracks the mileage](#) of my morning jogs, helps me [keep tabs on where my son is](#) located, and so much more.

Of course, if my phone and apps know where I am, then that means a lot of other people could, too. App developers, advertisers, the government - anyone can tap into the information if I install the wrong app or don't pay attention to my settings.

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03/23/2016

That's why your smartphone gives you the option to turn off your GPS. You can just leave it off most of the time and no one can track you, right?

Sorry, but that doesn't work. Your cell provider has another way of tracking your location, and anyone can get that information for a price - even if you use a cellphone that isn't smart.

I found this site where you can see where any phone is located using the same service carriers and app developers use.

The way your cell provider tracks you is through cellular towers. It knows what towers are in range of your phone and, of course, it knows where the towers are.

From there it doesn't take much work to narrow down your general location. The accuracy depends on the provider and how many towers are nearby.

You would hope your provider would keep this information to itself, but I'm sure you're not shocked to find out it doesn't. I'm not just talking about government subpoenas, either.

A company named [LocationSmart](#) partners with the major cell providers and makes it easy for app developers to access location information for their apps and services.

If you want to see how accurate your carrier's location system is, [try LocationSmart's demo](#). Just put in a phone number, respond to a text and you'll see your current location on a map.

As I said above, the accuracy varies. When I tried it, AT&T put me exactly at my office address. However, one of my employees tried it with Verizon and it put him at a random address a quarter mile south of the office.

Now, on the positive side, app developers don't just get access to your location when they sign up. You do have to allow an app or service to know your location before they can pull it.

In fact, most smartphones' Location Services settings apply to cell location as well as GPS.

To turn off or manage your Location Services settings in iOS 7, go to Settings>>Privacy>>Location Services.

For Android, it's under Settings>>Personal>>Location Services.

In Windows Phone, swipe left to bring up the Apps and tap Settings. In Settings, go to Location.



Handy hint: Turning off Location Services is also a good way to improve battery life. [Click here for even more battery-saving tricks.](#)

Your physical location isn't the only way organizations track you. [Click here to learn the one thing you need to do to stop advertisers from tracking what you do on your phone.](#)

If you're interested in more ways to secure your smartphone or tablet, [click here.](#)



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