



the
science
of...

SPYING

Citizenship Activity Pack

Teen Trackers

How new technologies can create issues of trust and privacy

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Purpose

To develop skills in:

- analysing information and its sources
- justifying a personal opinion about issues, problems or events
- contributing to group and exploratory class discussions, and taking part in debates
- using imagination to consider, express and empathise with other people's experiences and views.

Age range (years)



Time needed

1 – 1.5 hours



Background

We don't just use our mobile phones to call our friends. Mobile devices give us access to the internet and email. We can take pictures, keep diaries and make video and audio recordings. And now they can be used to track our every movement. Type 'mobile tracker' into a search engine and a host of companies will spring up offering you the chance to track your loved one or keep tabs on your children.

This activity encourages students to discuss issues of surveillance and privacy.

Steps

1. Put students in groups of two.
2. Pick one of the two scenarios outlined on pages 2 and 3 for each pair and hand them an appropriate role card.
3. Ask each pair to prepare a short role-playing scene that explores the reactions of each character.
4. When performing the scenes, stop the action and ask students watching if

they would react differently, or what *they* would say in response to the 'tracker'. If they feel confident, encourage them to act out their ideas.

5. You can use the prompt questions on page 5 if necessary.

Fact box: mobile tracking

Before you can register a phone to be tracked you must prove your identity using a credit card. The owner is then sent a tracking request text that they must reply to. Similar text alerts are sent every few days to guard against misuse of the service.



Why weren't you at the library?

Role card: Parent

You're worried that your child might be mixing with the wrong sort of people and not concentrating on their schoolwork. You're also concerned about their safety.

By tracking your teenage child's mobile phone, you've discovered that they were in the town centre and not in the library doing their homework as agreed.

You feel bad about tracking your child and find it difficult to confront them.



Why weren't you at the library?

Role card: Teenager

By tracking your mobile phone, your parent has discovered that you were in the town centre and not in the library.

Even though you agreed they could track your mobile phone (to make them feel happier you're safe and stop them calling all the time to find out where you are!) you're upset that they don't trust you. After all, you **did** go to the library, but found it hard to concentrate, so went for a walk with friends.



Are you seeing someone else?

Role card: **Boyfriend**

You've been suspicious for a while that your girlfriend is seeing someone else. After all she's lied to you before about spending time with another boy. Even so, you've found it too difficult to confront her, worried you might have the whole thing wrong, and look stupid.

So, when she wasn't looking you took her phone and registered it online (using your auntie's credit card) with a mobile tracking service. Now you realise that a tracker only tells you where someone is, not what they are doing. To make matters worse she's found out. You didn't realise that tracker services send regular texts to phone owners to let them know when their handsets are registered.

Now you're worried her discovery will end your relationship.



Are you seeing someone else?

Role card: **Girlfriend**

You've discovered your boyfriend has registered your mobile phone with a tracking service while you left it unattended.

You're shocked that he would take the phone without your knowledge – it's private! That aside you're bitterly disappointed he doesn't trust you but understand that because you lied to him before he's much more suspicious than he used to be. Now you're wondering whether you can trust *him*.

Where does this leave the two of you?

Teen Trackers: questions to prompt discussion

- Could tracking be used to expose truanting?
- Will it stop embarrassing phone calls from parents/guardians to find out where you are?
- How effective can it be when it only tracks where you are, but not what you are doing?
- Will it give parents/guardians peace of mind knowing that they can keep tabs on their children?
- Could it be used by other organisations to keep track of children? (the technology has already been used by a theme park and a primary school in Japan to keep tabs on children).
- Does it cause mistrust between parents/guardians and children?
- Is the technology safe or could it be used by strangers?
- Is this just another way of making money out of parents/guardians' fears?
- Does knowing children's whereabouts make parents feel happier or more concerned?
- How would you feel if your parents/guardians wanted to track your mobile phone? Would you let them?