

You probably see an arrow on your phone's home screen a hundred times a day but have never paid much attention to it. It's almost always on. What is it? And what does it stand for? Turns out it's to let you know something is following you. Here's what you need to know and what you might want to change

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SUPER

0-8 Jamey Tucker/whatthetech.tv

ON-CAMERA TEASE

It's something you see maybe a hundred times a day but don't notice it at all. I'm Jamey Tucker coming up, why do you want to pay attention to a small arrow on your phone screen?

ANCHOR INTRO

STUDIES SHOW PEOPLE LOOK AT THEIR SMARTPHONES UP TO 100 TIMES A DAY AND EVEN IF YOU ARE ALWAYS LOOKING AT YOUR PHONE SCREEN, YOU MAY HAVE NEVER NOTICED SOMETHING RATHER IMPORTANT.

IT'S HOW YOU SEE IF SOMEONE OR SOMETHING IS TRACKING YOUR EVERY MOVE. OUR CONSUMER TECHNOLOGY REPORTER JAMEY TUCKER TAKES A CLOSER LOOK AT THE TINY ICON YOU MAY WANT TO CHECK.

PACKAGE SCRIPT

This arrow is almost always on your screen. On the status bar right next to the time on an iPhone. What is it and what does it mean? Something is following you. The arrow represents an app that's currently tracking your location. If it's on the screen an app on your phone knows where you are and where you're going.

some apps require a location to be functional. Apple Maps, Google Maps, Waze, weather apps, and apps to help you find gas or restaurants. But some apps have no business knowing your location.

But some do anyway.

In settings, go to privacy and security then 'location services' to see which apps track your location. A purple arrow means that the app has recently tracked your location while a gray arrow means your location was tracked by the app within the last 24 hours.

The camera app, for example, sees your location every time you take a photo. But a radio station app? Pinterest? The news app Flipboard? Maybe not. Here you can change which apps

have access to your location. Change the settings from always, to never, or while using the app. I suggest changing some to ask next time or when I share.

System services on iPhones and Android devices require your location for things like "Find My", "emergency calls", automatically changing time zones, and most importantly, connecting from the nearest cell tower.

Others, you may want to say, stop following me. That's What the Tech? I'm Jamey Tucker

ANCHOR TAG

MANY APPS NOT ONLY TRACK YOUR LOCATION BUT SHARE IT WITH OTHER COMPANIES. MOST APPS WILL WORK JUST FINE WITHOUT SEEING YOUR LOCATION.

WEB STORY

Recent studies show people look at their smartphones 58 times a day on average. Other studies show the number of glances is closer to 100 times a day. No matter how frequently look at your phone, you may have never noticed a pretty important icon on the screen. It's a small arrow at the top of the screen next to the time. iPhone users may not see it if the dynamic island displays notifications or apps currently in use.

Go ahead and take a look. Do you see it? If you do, you may wonder what it means.

The arrow represents your phone's location settings, namely if an app has access and is currently using your location.

Some apps require using your location for their functionality. Navigation apps such as Apple Maps, Google Maps, and Waze need your phone's location in order to give directions. Weather apps need to know where you are to give current conditions. Apps that search for nearby gas stations, restaurants, coffee shops, and movie theaters require location as well.

Some apps though have access to your location that don't really need it.

Apps like Pinterest, photography apps such as BeReal, ESPN, Flipboard, many radio station apps, Snapchat, some smart home device apps, Amazon, and Walmart shopping apps ask for your location as well.

To review apps asking for (and gaining access to) your phone's location, go into settings, then privacy. Tap the Location Services settings to see all the apps that want to track you.

Gray arrows designate apps that have accessed your location within the past 24 hours. A purple arrow shows apps that have accessed your location within the last 24 hours.

You can restrict apps from accessing your location. You can authorize your location to apps to only when you're using the app, or set it to "ask next time or when you share".

Furthermore, some apps require you to share your precise location. That makes sense for apps such as Uber, Lyft, W3W, and navigational apps. Others such as radio apps, local businesses, calendar apps, and photo album apps may only need your approximate location.

Many free apps not only track your location but can share the location information with other companies. They won't do that without your permission though, which you may have given it when you first installed the app.

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