

Beating the Thieves With Location Tracking Technology

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Police aim to 'design out' crime by equipping valuable items with tracking devices that sound an alert or record their movement. They are being helped by electronic engineers at the University of Leeds who are devising a way of locating objects using **widely-available technology**.

Using Bluetooth – a short-range communications technology incorporated into many mobile phones and computers – researchers are creating networks which locate devices in relation to each other and track them using monitoring software. By collecting location information an administrator can keep track of valuable assets.

Bluetooth gives out a radio signal that is picked up by similarly-equipped devices. Leeds electronic engineers have discovered a way of measuring the distance between them by measuring the time signals take to travel between them. If, for example a computer is moved, an alert will sound and a record of its unauthorised movement can be used in court.

David Walsh, of electronic and electrical engineering, said: “The main application is for crime detection and prevention. By locating equipment to half a metre radius or less it will be a deterrent to crime. If something is stolen it will be possible to pinpoint the exact location it was stolen from.”

Dr Walsh hopes the technique will be adopted more widely. “If it works well enough it could be used for locating firefighters in a burning building or to keep track of equipment on large industrial sites, instead

of blueprints which have to be constantly revised.”

The joint two-year £240,000 project with Imperial College is being carried out with the Home Office’s Police Scientific Development Branch and the Forensic Science Services. Dr Walsh is working with Dr Andy Kemp, Dr John Cooper, Dr Gary Brodin and colleagues at the Institute of Satellite Navigation.

Source: [University of Leeds](#)

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