

# Review: Lost something? Tile can help you find it

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I wish I had all the time back that I've wasted looking for my keys.

My wife doesn't even ask what I'm looking for as we head out of the house - she knows. It's usually my keys or my phone.

So what can technology do to help?

I've been testing the Tile ([thetileapp.com](http://thetileapp.com)), a tiny Bluetooth locator you can attach to almost any item you're likely to lose.

The obvious use for me is on my keychain.

When I leave my house, I do the three-pocket pat-down for my wallet, phone and keys.

The wallet is usually the easy one. The keys and phone are a bit tougher. I'd say I waste two to five minutes looking for one or the other each day.

Since I've put the Tile on my keys, I've cut down the lost time to less than 15 seconds per day.

How so?

With the Tile attached to my keys, I can call up the free Tile app on my phone. With the push of one button, the Tile makes a noise loud enough to be found anywhere in my house.

It also works in reverse.

If I have my keys but can't find my phone, I can double-click a button on the Tile and my phone will play a ringtone, even if it's set to silent mode.

But what if I can't find my keys or my phone?

Well, that's when I yell to my wife and ask whether she knows where they are.

Technology can only go so far.

## HOW DOES IT WORK?

The Tile is a small Bluetooth locator that can talk to the Tile app on any smartphone or tablet.

Bluetooth has a range of about 30 feet, but I've seen it work at up to 100 feet with a clear line of sight.

Locating your Tile is easy if you have a phone.

With the Tile app, you can use your phone to locate the Tile, but what if the Tile is out of Bluetooth range? What if you really did lose your keys?

Tile's app is constantly remembering where it last saw your keys. If your Tile is out of range, you'll see the last known location shown on a map.

So if you see you left your keys at Starbucks and walked down the street, you may get lucky and find them again by walking back to the last known location.

Once you get within 100 feet or so, the app should lock onto the location

and let you find the Tile with its locator sound.

## WHEN IS LOST REALLY LOST?

What if you get back to the last known location and your keys are gone?

Tile has a "lost" feature where you can mark your Tile as lost and "summon the power of the Tile Community."

What does that mean?

Once you mark it as lost, other Tile users will help you locate your Tile.

If any other Tile user walks within range of a lost Tile, that user's Tile app will send a signal back to the Tile server about the location of the lost Tile.

You'll then get a notification showing the location of your lost Tile.

The lost Tile locator feature works without any interaction from the other Tile users - it's all done by Tile behind the scenes.

Whenever a user has the Tile app open, any lost Tiles within range will be noticed and reported.

That user doesn't know about your lost device or about having located it.

It's up to you to use the location information to find your lost Tile. Users don't even need to be a Tile owner to download the app and help find lost Tiles.

## WHAT DOES IT COST?

Tiles are pretty cheap. To buy one will set you back \$25, but they get cheaper in bulk.

You can buy a four-pack for \$70, eight for \$130 and a 12-pack for \$180.

There is no monthly fee for using the Tile or its locator service, but the Tiles are sealed devices, meaning once the battery dies, you have to replace the entire Tile.

I've used other Bluetooth locators with removable batteries, and they're bigger than the Tile, which makes them harder to pocket.

The Tile's battery will last more than a year, and after 11 months of your Tile being active, you'll get an email offering to recycle your old Tile and sell you a new Tile for \$12 (half price).

So there is no subscription, but there is an ongoing cost of owning a Tile. I think the price is right for not having to deal with batteries.

## CONCLUSION

Overall I really like the Tile. The times I've needed to use it, it's worked flawlessly.

Tiles are cheap enough that you could use them for keeping track of all kinds of things, or you could buy a four-pack and hand them out at Christmas.

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Pros: Small enough, light, good range, no subscription.

Cons: Disposable. Can't change battery.

Bottom line: Does its job well.

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