THIRD PARTY APPLICATION LOCATION DATA

In addition to the default applications that come pre-installed in mobile devices, third party applications (apps) add more functionality that makes modern smart phones so desirable. There are millions of different third party apps that can be installed and new ones are created every day. When people install a new Android or iOS app, it will prompt for the user's permission before accessing personal information.

Many of these applications will use the device location to make the usage of the app simpler, as well as for marketing purposes or notifications. For example, a mapping app needs access to the device location data to place your location on a map and provide route guidance. At the same time, it may alert you to nearby businesses.

The location data could be stored in the application database within the device memory and some will then transmit your location over the network to the service provider.

Installed Apps

Third party apps can also provide a workaround to using a mobile device without connecting to the network or paying for cellular service data plan. For example, a popular free third party communication app called Tango allows users to communicate over Wi-Fi. If an investigator examined a device using Tango, the phone's default call logs could be empty. The Tango data would be in the device memory, but in the file system of the application and not the default memory areas of the device.

Where Are the Juicy Texts?

When you have a case where texting is suspected, yet the call detail and cell extraction records don't seem to show the juicy text messages it is likely a 3rd party application was used.

Check for installed applications as a part of every investigation as this data may not be recognized by the forensic tool and will need to be manually extracted or carved and decoded before it can be analyzed.

Background Application Usage

Some apps prompt the user to allow location data even when the application is not being used. In this example, allowing access would enable the AccuWeather app to determine the user's location even when the app is not actively in use for updates and severe weather alerts.

For more information about application data see I.R.I.S. LLC Digital Evidence Toolbox – Mobile Device Forensics drawer.

I.R.I.S. LLC
www.irisinvestigations.com (860) 522-0001
Digital Evidence Toolbox: LOCATION DATA FROM 3rd PARTY APPS
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DIGITAL EVIDENCE TOOLBOX

For more topics and information on digital evidence, see our toolbox at:
http://www.irisinvestigations.com/wordpress/iris-digital-evidence-toolbox/
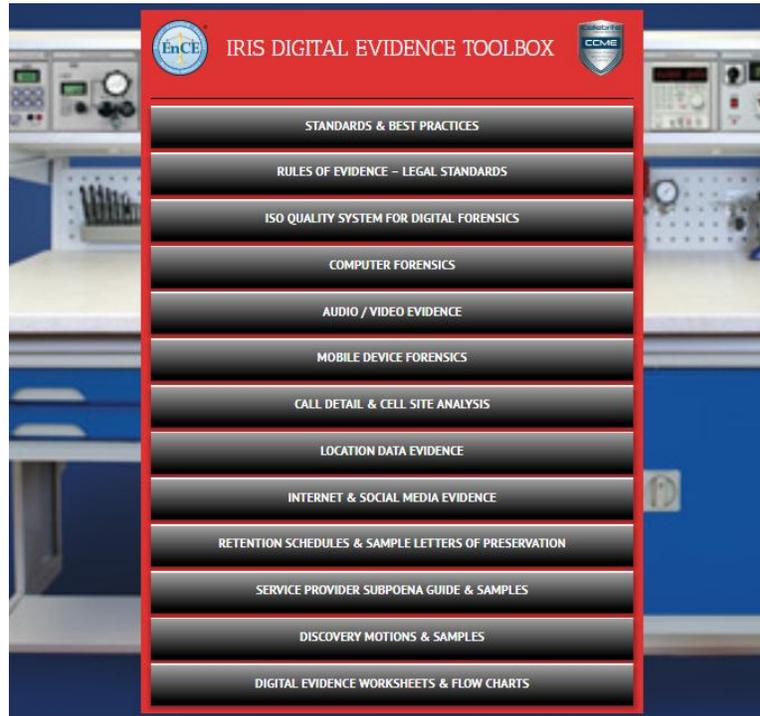
For more information on location evidence, call now and speak with a certified expert.

I.R.I.S. LLC is available 24 hours in emergency cases.