

**Location, location, location ...**

Location-based social networking sites allow members to share their whereabouts through GPS, email or text.

**Citysense**  
Populates a map of where people are transmitting a mobile phone signal from. You can see where your friends are congregating and instantly get information about what's happening at a specific hot spot.

**GPSii**  
Allows users to upload photos, videos and other information about what they're up to and then locate it. For example, a user could take a photo of an ice cream stand, upload it to GPSii and add the GPS location. Friends can then see where you took the picture.

**Loopit**  
Turns your mobile phone into a compass. Users can mark a map with places their friends have visited and leave comments and suggestions which can be shared. Thinking about going to a restaurant? See what your friends had to say about it.

**What!**  
Enter your location and a map will show restaurants, the distance from your location and details about the establishment, such as when it opens, if it serves brunch, type of payment options etc. You can upload photos and write reviews.



**Tracking trek:** UOW's Dr Katina Michael's students can monitor her movements according to where her Blackberry GPS logs her on Google Latitude as part of a study into new tracking devices in mobile phones and laptops, presently unregulated in Australia.

Picture: MELANIE RUSSELL

# Katina on right path to test tracking technology

By COURTNEY TRENWITH

IT seems like a fun experiment to log your every move on the world wide web for friends and family to track.

But what happens when the automated location device in your mobile phone or laptop somehow gets it wrong and posts you as being in a totally different city, or suspicious trackers assume because you were in a pub you were drunk?

These and many other scenarios are potential im-

plications of the latest technology many do not even know exists in their phone or computer.

University of Wollongong associate professor Katina Michael is testing the implications of the new technologies and will eventually recommend regulations for its use.

There are no laws in Australia governing the use of the technology, which is less than a year old, despite its potentially serious impact on privacy.

Dr Michael said users

needed to approve "friends" to access the information, but it was only a matter of time before hackers found their way into the seemingly secure network.

As part of the experiment, she has given a group of her students access to the GPS tracking system in her Blackberry, which logs her movements on Google Latitude.

"What we're exploring is people's initial reactions to these capabilities - both the positive benefits and the negative implications."

"We need to regulate it because at the moment it's open slather as to how people use these things, and the more tech-savvy you are, the more ahead of the game you are," Dr Michael said.

Despite the potential negative implications, the technology provides exciting opportunities for networking and immediate access to information.

Location-based social networking sites allow users to do things such as send a request for company to others logged in as being in the

same area; search for things to do based on where you are; and provide friends with detailed information about where you have travelled.

But Dr Michael said such sites could also pose dangers.

"They know where we have been, but they don't necessarily know what we've been doing."

"The question is, where are we going in the next five years and how do we plot the safety implications of these applications?"

## House blaze

POLICE are treating as suspicious a house fire at Nowra that caused \$50,000 damage.

About 3.30pm on Friday, passers-by noticed smoke and flames coming from the single-storey house on Kalandar St.

Fire brigades went to the scene and quickly contained the fire before it was able to spread to adjoining residences.

Nobody was inside the house at the time of the blaze.

Anyone who noticed suspicious activity near the house are asked to call Crime Stoppers on 1800 333 000.

## Drugs death

AN Australian musician who died in a Hong Kong hotel had taken a lethal drug cocktail he bought from a nightclub doorman.

Daniel Hall, 21, and a fellow member of the West Australian Youth Orchestra, Evan Williams, snorted a mixture of cocaine, ketamine and opiates on December 19, the Sunday Morning Post said yesterday.

The report said the doorman had given them the impression they were buying only cocaine.

All 75 members of the orchestra have returned to Perth.

## Rail arrests

MORE than 1000 people across the state have been arrested during a crackdown on anti-social and criminal behaviour on the rail network.

NSW Minister for Police Michael Daley said that during the three-month Operation Vision V, 1084 people were arrested for alleged robberies, assaults, vandalism and alcohol-related crime.

Other results included 27,903 rail infringement notices, 511 traffic infringement notices, 283 other infringement notices, 138 cannabis cautions and 7626 rail cautions.

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