THE FACTS: GEO-TAGGING

What is geotagging?

- Geo-tagging is adding geographic identification to photographs, videos, websites and SMS messages. It’s like tagging a precise map grid coordinate to everything you post on the internet.

- Geo-tags may automatically be embedded in pictures taken with smartphones, but many people are unaware that those photos have been tagged before they post them online.

- Photos posted to photo sharing sites like Flickr may also be tagged with their locations.

- Posting photos tagged with an exact location allows others to track your exact location and correlate it with other information.

Geotagging photos

- Photos have used geotagging for quite some time. Some formats such as JPEG format allow geographic information to be embedded within the image that can be read by picture viewers.

- Owners should study their cameras’ manuals to learn whether their devices automatically add geolocation metadata to pictures and understand how to turn off those functions.

- On photo sharing sites, people can tag a location on their photos, even if their camera does not. A simple search for “Afghanistan” on Flickr reveals thousands of location tagged photographs that have been uploaded.

- Soldiers deploy to areas all over the world. Some locations are public, others are classified. Soldiers should not geo-tag uploaded photos. Publishing photos of classified locations can be detrimental to mission success, and in violation of the Uniform Code of Military Justice.

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