

## Anonymous Apps

Welcome to this training lesson on **Anonymous Apps**. In this lesson, we'll look at the possible implications of using private, secret sharing, or anonymous apps.

**Estimated Completion Time:** 5 minutes.

# Anonymous Apps

**Introduction.** A recent trend in mobile phone apps are those that are anonymous in nature. In effect, these apps can be used by anyone to communicate with others anonymously.

Some of these apps allow you to contact others. Others allow you to post 'secrets'. Most allow you to upload photos and messages in what they claim is an anonymous method - no one will ever know who you are.



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**The Dangers.** We've talked previously about how the Internet seems to encourage some people to feel entitled to insult, threaten, groom, or harm others (psychologically or even physically).

When a user is totally anonymous - thinking no-one will be able to determine their real identity - they may feel more emboldened to threaten and insult other users.





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**Fake Accounts.** As with all social media and related apps, scammers and predators will put a lot of effort into making the user behind their app or online profile seem trustworthy, innocent, and interested in the same things as you.

A predator can work hard to obtain this trust, and will rely on it.



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**Are You Really Anonymous?** First of all, it is safe to assume you are not truly anonymous using many of these apps.

Some apps, like *Tinder*, and *Whisper*, may share location information (not a precise location). Combine this with photos you may be sharing, and you may not be as hard to find as you think. And the last thing you want is to a predator to know where you are, where you work, where you go to school, or where you go for drinks.



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**Law Enforcement and the Courts.** As we have also mentioned before, certain law enforcement bodies and courts may be able to obtain information from the app developers to identify any particular user should the need arise.





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**Hackers.** Apps that promise anonymity *have been*, and *will be* in the future, hacked. And these hacks may well identify exactly who you are, and what you have been posting to these apps.

And, as these apps are created and provided by often private companies, we can never really be sure exactly what sort of information is being collected each time you post information. The U.S. Government is taking a proactive role with many developers to ensure that these apps do as they claim.

In any case, even given the best intentions to keep your information anonymous - hackers are *very* determined, and *very* good.



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**Who Else is Listening?** Recently, there has been a lot of speculation and information about who may be reading your online posts, emails, and messages.

Who is? We will probably never know. Perhaps security agencies, perhaps overseas countries. Perhaps other computers. Perhaps a disgruntled employee at the app development company.

App and hardware developers are trying to keep one step ahead of security agencies around the world, providing new security and encryption. It may be working, it may not. I think we can safely say that if a government agency cracked the device encryption for a phone, app, or platform - they would be unlikely to reveal that information.





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**Losing Your Phone.** If you really share your innermost secrets online in anonymous apps - ensure that you have very good security on your phone (at the very least, a passcode to turn the phone on). If you lose your phone, or it is stolen, all of your private information could be just a few simple clicks away.



## Anonymous Apps

You've now completed this training lesson on **Anonymous Apps**. In this lesson, we looked at the possible implications of using private, secret sharing, or anonymous apps.