# Legal use of IMEI number

The IMEI number is used to prevent stolen mobile phones from accessing a network and being used to make phone calls. In case the phone is stolen the owner can contract their network carrier and tell them to disable their phone using its IMEI number. When the carrier has blocked the phone, the phone is unable to connect to any network. With the IMEI number the phone can easily be blocked from the network, even if you change your SIM card, the phone will still be blocked, because the IMEI number is stored on the phone itself and not on the SIM card. [[1]](#footnote-1)

When a carrier gets the message that a phone has been stolen or lost, they contact CEIR (Central Equipment Identity Register) which will blacklist the device. This will make the phone unusable. [[2]](#footnote-2)

Shopping centers in the UK are tracking their costumer’s every move. They track their costumer’s by monitoring the signal produced by the costumer’s cell phone. The phone is tracked by placing receivers around the shop the system then use a triangulation method by measuring the distance from the phone to three receivers.

The system does not identify the owner, but only the phone’s IMEI number. It is the operator only that can match the IMEI number to the personal information about the owner. Path Intelligence, the developer of the technology says that the equipment is just a tool for market research.

## What does the user, use the IMEI to?

When the user tries to connect to the mobile network, the phone first looks for an operator where the phone has permission to connect. Then the IMEI number is checked in a central register of all usable IMEI number. If the IMEI number has been reported stolen, the police get notified with the information of the location and when the phone last was used. And if the phone is blacklisted the phone does not get permission to connect to the network. [[3]](#footnote-3)

## What can apps use IMEI to?

When an application is launched it checks the device IMEI number and from that number the phone can see the device brand and model. The application can then compare it with a list of devises that is allowed to run the application. This could be used to determine if the phone is fast enough to run the application. [[4]](#footnote-4)

1. <http://www.gsm-security.net/faq/imei-international-mobile-equipment-identity-gsm.shtml> [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. <http://www.gsm-security.net/faq/imei-international-mobile-equipment-identity-gsm.shtml> [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. <http://www.mobilsiden.dk/tips/imei-nummer,lid.1513/> [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. <http://www.gsm-security.net/faq/imei-international-mobile-equipment-identity-gsm.shtml> [↑](#footnote-ref-4)