

Mobiles on right track

Matt Sun

Mobile phones that track your exact location and can tell you how to get to the nearest Italian restaurant or where the kids are will be released this year.

However, the one thing that the handsets cannot do is track a lost phone.

Assisted global positioning system (AGPS) tracking will be a standard feature in mobiles, with the first handset due for release in Australia in August.

It will be a standard application for new phones in about 12 months.

The handset will feature a small GPS antenna capable of showing its location on a CBD map to within 5m.

Existing mobile phone tracking, using base stations, pinpoint handsets to within a 200m to 600m radius.

The AGPS handsets will be no larger than standard mobiles with the antenna concealed in a "bump" on the back.

Mobile tracking company LocateMy Phone spokesman Wade Short said the new technology raised privacy concerns.

"There are family-type services being looked at but you have got to be sure about security and privacy," said Short. "We are all working to make sure it's a more solid

platform, especially when you're tracking kids or the elderly suffering dementia."

But it can't help track lost or stolen phones because thieves could switch off the GPS option and remove the SIM card.

"We think location-based services will be as big as SMS, but that will take a few years," Short said.