Eye on you

Technological advances make it easier to monitor teen activities, location By Melissa Dahl -- Bee Staff Writer

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Maybe parents don't really have eyes in the backs of their heads, but an increasing number of monitoring devices means they can have eyes almost anywhere else. Right or wrong, advances in technology allow parents to track exactly where their teens are going and how fast they're getting there by using GPS-enabled cell phones. And

ware is available to keep track of every click on the Internet - sometimes without children knowing they are being tracked. Think your parents are monitoring you? Want to keep better tabs on your kids? Here's a look at some of the gadgets that make it happen.

Sprint Family Locator



Stealth factor: The locator program requires the youth's acknowledgment, and the youth is notified by a text message every time the parent requests his or her location. What you need: Certain Sprint phone models can download the program.

Cost: For \$9.99 a month, register up to four phones with unlimited location requests and

How to get it: Go to www.sprint.com/ familylocator or to a retail store.

100 text messages for each phone Disney Mobile Family Locator

picture messaging and minutes used. Parents can determine the hours of the day and the days of the week when kids can use their phones. Stealth factor: It doesn't send the child's phone an alert if he or she is being located.

What it does: It locates kids' phones with GPS, and it also limits text messaging,

What you need: You'll have to buy either the Pantech or LG phone. How to get it: It'll be available at http://www.disneymobile.com/ in June.

monthly service hasn't been determined. MapQuest Find Me

What it does: Locate friends and family through GPS and monitor them from the Web or a cell phone

Cost: \$59.99 for the model by Pantech and \$109.99 for a model by LG. The cost for

Stealth factor: Each user has to authorize the monitoring.

Cost: \$3.99 per month.

What you need: It's available on certain Nextel and Sprint phones, and on BlackBerry nd 7520

Teen Arrive Alive GPS

How to get it: Download it from findme.mapquest.com

going and how fast they're traveling, through the teen's GPS-enabled cell phone.

Cat Trax

Stealth factor: When the phone is turned on and the program loads, a screen appears that reads, "This phone is GPS-enabled and may be tracking you." What you need: For now, Teen Arrive Alive is available only on Nextel cell phones.

What it does: Teen Arrive Alive lets parents view where their teens are, where they're

How to get it: Sign up on http://www.teenarrivealive.com/. A representative will talk you through the setup process Cost: \$49.99 activation fee, and \$19.99 a month.

What it does: As long as their phones are turned on, parents can locate kids, the direction they're headed and their speed using a map displayed on their cell phone or the Internet. They also can set up a GeoFence, and choose to be notified by e-mail or

text when the phone leaves that designated area. Stealth factor: Parents could install Cat Trax without letting their kid know, since

there's no indicator on the phone. What you need: Specific models of Nextel cell phones: Nextel i275, Nextel i760, Nextel i850.

How to get it: http://www.cattrax.us/. Call (877) 229-2287 and set up a time to send your phone to the company. They'll download the software onto the cell phone and ship it back to you within 24 hours.

Cost: \$19.99 Then there's the black box

where the car's going, but also how it's getting there. It records whether the teen's slamming on the brakes or gunning the accelerator, and many are small enough to hide behind the dashboard. Some black boxes use GPS to let parents check the Internet to see where the teen's car is any time they want. If parents don't want their teen traveling outside of a certain area, some products let them draw a "GeoFence" on an Internet map, and they'll receive an alert on their cell phone or by e-mail if the car leaves that

"Black boxes" hook up to the car's electrical system so they're able to record not just

AllTrack USA What it does: This small black box (it's about the size of two decks of cards) lets parents track where and how teens are driving in real time, viewable on a map on the Internet, using GPS. It also records the history of where they've been. It's hooked up to the car's electrical system, so parents can remotely unlock the doors, disable the starter or honk the horn. Parents can set up a GeoFence and be notified if the car leaves that area, and it also records hard braking, hard comparing and rapid acceleration.

that area, and it also records hard braking, hard cornering and rapid acceleration.

Stealth factor: Parents can hide this little black box (it's about the size of two decks of cards). It's usually installed behind the dashboard. What you need: It works with any car made after 1955. How to get it: Order it at http://www.alltrackusa.com/.

What it does: This black box records any speeding and aggressive driving on a memory card, which can be plugged into the family computer to reveal exactly how the teen was

What you need: You can install the black box yourself on vehicles newer than 1996;

driving at any time Stealth factor: Since it's small enough to fit under a driver's seat, they won't see it, but it gives audible warnings telling the driver to slow down or quit driving aggressively.

Cost: \$524, plus an access fee of \$34.95 a month.

RS-1000 black box

SearchHelp

anything older than that requires hard-wire installation. Where to get it: Order the black box at http://www.roadsafety.com/. Cost: \$280 for 1996 to 2002 vehicles and \$295 for 2003 and newer vehicles.

SmartDriver What it does: It records speed, accelerator use, distance and starts and stops.

driver, so it's possible to conceal it underneath the dashboard.

How to get it: Order it at http://www.smart-driver.com/.

What you need: A model 1996 or later vehicle and a PC with Windows 95 or later. It can't operate with Macintosh-based systems.

Stealth factor: This black box is small and doesn't include an alarm system for the

Cost: Buy it for \$495 or rent it for six months at \$49.95 a month. What about safety online? When smaller kids or teenagers are off the road and back at home, chances are they'll

allow parents to watch and record whatever their kids are viewing online.

head straight for the computer. Monitoring and key-logging software, like these products,

What it does: While the kids are online, parents can monitor every click of their mouse from another computer. The software can remotely lock the computer, automatically

shut down instant messaging sessions if inappropriate language is used, open or close a browser or change the Web site they're viewing. It doesn't filter sites, but it lets parents watch whatever their kids are doing online as they're doing it. Stealth factor: They claim the only way your kid will know this is installed on his computer is if you tell him. What you need: The software is only compatible with Windows 2000 and XP. How to get it: Order it at http://www.searchhelp.com/. Cost: \$79.95. It can be programmed to monitor up to two computers. Specter Pro 5.0

What it does: This keylogging software records everything the teen is doing on the

computer, such as e-mails and instant messages - and not just their side - it gets the entire conversation. E-mails and instant messages can be immediately forwarded to the parent. It also takes snapshots of the screen as often as once per second, and parents can later play those screen shots back in a video format. It also can block certain Web sites, but instead of a screen popping up saying this Web site is blocked, it's programmed to make it appear that the site just isn't available right then. Stealth factor. Since no icons appear once this software has been downloaded to your computer, it can be installed without the kids knowing. What you need: It works with anything above Windows 98. How to get it: Order the software at http://www.spectersoft.com/. Cost:

\$99.95 SpyBuddy What it does: Also keylogging software, it records every keystroke, including both sides what it does. Also keylogging sollware, it records every keystroke, including both store of IM (instant message) conversations, e-mails and any changes made to the hard drive. Users also can set up an account on a ViewMyLogs, com account, allowing them to access activity reports from anywhere at any time of the day. Stealth factor: This software can also be secretly installed. What you need: It works with any Windows system. How to get it: Order it at exploreanywhere.com. Cost: \$69.99 for the SpyBuddy software, and \$10 a month for an account on ViewMyLogs.com.

Cyber Patrol 7.5

What it does: It records where kids are going online, when they're there and how long they stay. If they're supposed to be doing homework from 3 to 5 p.m., parents can block chat or online games at that time. And chat and instant-messaging systems can prohibit kids from giving away information such as names, addresses or phone numbers. It also can block program downloads. Stealth factor: The program features a "stealth option," so kids won't know they're being monitored. What you need: The software only runs on Window. How to get it: Order it at http://www.cyberpatrol.com/. Cost: \$39.95

for a 12-month license. The Bee's Melissa Dahl can be reached at (916) 321-1219 or at mdahl@sacbee.com.

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