

Using iBeacons to Disable Apps and Phone Features

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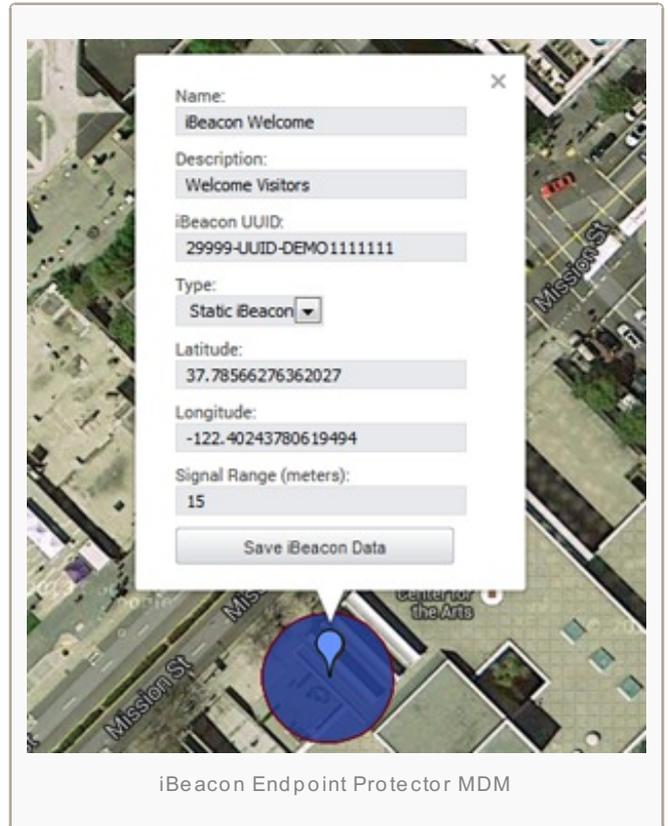
Sometimes it isn't what an iBeacon will let your phone DO, it's what it will PREVENT your phone from doing.

In a use case I'd never frankly thought about, Endpoint Protector [proposes a promising line of thinking](#): having iBeacons trigger phones to disable features or lock off usage of certain apps.

For the corporate-minded security type, it's a way to lasso in all those personal phones running around your top secret R&D lab...but there are also encouraging use cases in healthcare and education.

What is an iBeacon?

iBeacons are small devices that do little more than transmit a small data signal to the world around them. Phones that have Bluetooth LE enabled will 'listen' for these signals and if it hears them will wake up any apps that have iBeacon detection built in. The beacon and the phone do a sort of digital handshake, and if they recognize each other then different events can happen.



The benefit of iBeacons is they're cheap, can run on batteries for months or years at a time, and will soon be ubiquitous (every iPhone made in the last 2 years is a potential beacon).

“OFF” is the New Black (which is the old Orange)

When we think of iBeacons, we usually think of what they make a phone DO. Because an iBeacon allows you to geolocate a phone down to a few feet, they can trigger events when you walk into a store or when you stand in front of a painting in a museum.

But what if instead of a beacon triggering your phone to turn content ON, it triggers it to turn content OFF?

By pairing iBeacons with Endpoint Protector's Mobile Device Management (MDM) software, you can suddenly imagine all kinds of scenarios where you want to create a specific mobile device environment.

One example they give is employees in a corporate conference room – an iBeacon in the corner could trigger employee phones to turn off their cameras, giving assurance that there won't be any photos leaked over on Gizmodo as you plan your next widget design:

“With an iBeacon placed at the door or a specific area of the office building, each employee can automatically receive wi-fi settings or have certain security restrictions based on the company's internal policy.”

iBeacons in the Classroom

I actually like their example of a classroom even more. As more classrooms (well, the ones who can afford it anyways) give iPads to kids, iBeacons could end up being a secure way to avoid distractions when in class:

“Using a beacon, when the teacher enters the classroom with an iBeacon in the pocket, all iPads are forced to allow access only to a textbook app and Wikipedia website. Entering the library, the iOS mobile device is automatically switched to silent.”

So when it comes to iBeacons, sometimes it's what they can STOP as much as what they can start. And like most of iBeacon technology one advantage to consumers is that it's opt-in (unless your phone or tablet is owned by your employer, of course).

So if you're taking photos of Apple's new TV set feel free to send them my way, just be sure you're using your personal phone when you take the snaps.