

How to prevent car break-ins: Turn off your Bluetooth

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Those apps that scan for devices using Bluetooth could sound great. The AirPods have fallen out of the ear and they're somewhere in the house. Whip open the app to find them. Or that lost phone, missing tablet or even camera. All good, right?

But you're not the only one using them—and that's not good.

"A new phenomenon has made its way to car theft," the Folsom California Police Department noted on Facebook recently. "Criminals are using Bluetooth scanners to find electronics hiding inside cars."

Many of the devices we use today send out Bluetooth signals to pair, or connect, with others. Apple now asks if you want to share your Bluetooth on recent operating system upgrades, and most people say yes because they want to connect more easily.

And connecting means convenience. Bluetooth sharing brings Alexa to the car, with the Echo Auto accessory, pairs AirPods with an iPhone for [digital music](#), connects cameras and apps and much more.

The prevalence of connections—and the absence of cords—can make for more missing pieces. So because people are prone to losing devices, like a

single wireless earbud, and need a solution for finding them, many app makers have started offering Bluetooth scanning apps to help locate them. Popular ones offered for Apple and Android phones include Bluetooth BLE Device Finder, BLE Scanner, BLE Nearby and Bluetooth Smart Scanner.

Now a quick word of caution: Before you leave your [phone](#), computer, iPad or some other device in your locked car, turn off the Bluetooth. First, you shouldn't be leaving expensive items like laptops and phones in the car anyway. But if you must, go to the settings section of your [device](#) and turn Bluetooth off first before you walk away from them.

Why let some criminal use a [scanner](#) to find your stuff, smash the window and take it away when you can toggle Bluetooth off to render them undetectable?

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