

by Alan J. Pierce, EdD

iFi Smart Electronic Key Fob (iFi = I Found it)

Apple IOS 5 and higher MSRP \$ 34.95
 Android 3.2 and higher MSRP \$ 39.95

Does the statement “I’d lose my head if it wasn’t attached” sound like something you might say? If you answered yes, then the iFi Smart Tag might be a product you would like to own. It is a small Bluetooth electronic key fob that you link to your telephone through a free iFi app and then attach to another item that you don’t want to misplace. See photo 1. If you misplace or forget your cellphone or the key fob item this smart tag system will help you retrieve them.

To test the system I attached the iFi key fob to my key ring. Now if my keys and cellphone are separated to the point that Bluetooth connectivity between them is lost, they will both start to noisily remind me of my forgetfulness. When the iFi tag got to be around 22 steps away from my cellphone it began to chirp on and then off for a few seconds at a time. When I didn’t remedy the situation it did this for hours until its battery was discharged.

My cell phone also provided an audible signal. The app gives you signal choices so you can find the one that will snap you out of your senior moment. Sorry to say that when you walk away with your phone but not with the item that the tag is attached to, the phone only plays the warning alarm once when Bluetooth connectivity is lost.

However, the system is a finding tool that you can activate anytime you misplace your cellphone or its key fob item. Each time you press the button on the iFi key fob or press the button in the iFi cellphone app the missing part of the duo will chirp to help

you find its location. Since this system works on Bluetooth, a signal that your phone and tag both provide directly to each other, you can actually be in a cellphone dead zone without Wi-Fi and still press the button on one item to find its mate.

Basically after you have attached your keys to the iFi fob and have the company’s free app running on your phone you will have to forget both of these items in the same place to avoid the sounding of the alarms. What if you are in a very

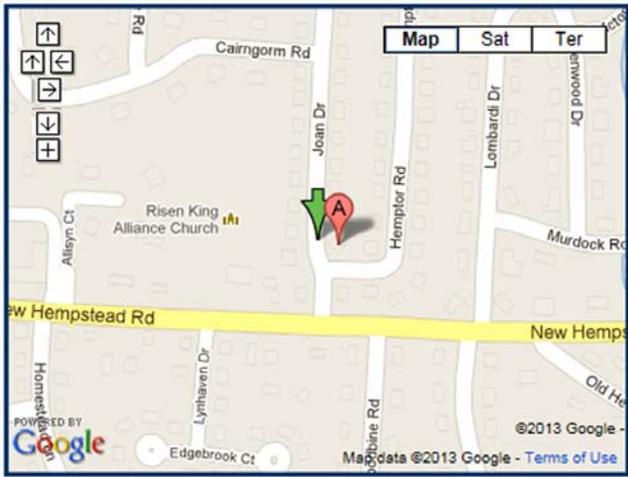
noisy environment and you don’t hear the alarms and drive away without your phone? As long as your phone isn’t in a dead zone the iFi app should automatically email you the location where the separation took place. This should take place if the iFi electronic fob and your cellphone remain apart for over 3 minutes. When testing this part of the system results were spotty. On the tests where an email was received the message included a Google map that showed where the separation took place. See photo 2.



iFi Electronic Key Fob & App

The key fob with its constant chirping does a good job

reminding you that you walked away from you cellphone. The single momentary chirping from your phone is an insufficient message that you are leaving the key fob. This product would be greatly improved if the cellphone signal was made as annoying as the one from the key fob.



Alan is co-author of **Introduction to Technology Glencoe McGraw-Hill 2010** and a **TechDirections Magazine** Columnist .

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