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# Stalking fears over mobile phone flaw

by **ETAN SMALLMAN**

MOBILE phone users are at risk of being tracked by bosses, stalkers and cyber criminals, researchers warn.

The public faces such perils because of two major security flaws, which allow 'ordinary people' to spy on victims within their homes – or even across different countries.

A team of researchers from Birmingham found vulnerabilities on the 3G system, which is standard across virtually all mobile phones.

They warn that anyone with expertise could 'mass market' the method of attack, by packaging up the equipment needed and selling kits for as little as £100.

Tracking was done by 'intercepting, altering and injecting' messages in

both directions between mobile phones and the base station which handles and relays calls in their area.

Attackers can put 'femtocells' – fake base stations – wherever they want.

Prof Mark Ryan, who led the University of Birmingham study, said: 'The attacks could be used to track

staff movements within a building. They could also be used by stalkers who want to follow individuals, or a spouse who wants to track a partner's movements.

'For example, if you want to know if your wife visits your friend in Paris, you can put a base station in his house.'

Prof Ryan said the only thing we could do to mitigate the risk was switch off our phone when not using it.

He said that 4G is likely to suffer the

same problems, and despite positive reactions from manufacturers and operators, they are not easy to solve.

Prof Ryan also warned that the risks extended to London's Oyster cards, wireless payment cards and door entry fobs, 'since we use wireless technology for all aspects of our lives'.