

Reviews on AirTag: Disaster for Android users

This 'stray' finder will work best with expensive, important items. However, it can be misused.

I'm a pretty neat person. Furniture when going home like backpack, glasses, keys or wallet are stored in the correct tray in a box by the door. Thanks to that, I rarely have to look for things that are important to me before going to work.

However, no matter how neat I am, there are times when I lose my belongings. I once dropped the wallet on an acquaintance's car, and because the wallet fell into the slot under the seat, my friend could not find it. Had it not been found by the car washer, I might have had to go over and over again.

These are situations where a misplaced device like the AirTag comes in very handy. I was very excited when Apple introduced the AirTag, but it still has many inconveniences when it comes to real-world experience.

Accessories 'cheap' the Apple way

Excluding EarPods or chargers, AirTags is Apple's cheapest standalone product. This accessory has a genuine price of about 800,000 VND, and if you buy a set of 4, the price is a bit lower.

However, for many it won't be the final price to be able to use AirTag. The device has a round design and two sides are not flat, meaning it is difficult to secure in the compartment of a handbag.



AirTag is also quite thick, so putting it inside thin wallets will make the wallet look up quite a lot. In addition, if the AirTag is placed in the wallet or compartment too thin, the efficiency will also decrease.

The solution now is to buy a leather pouch. The genuine bags Apple sells are all priced at or several times the AirTag itself (between \$ 29-449). The leather holster of the handmade units also costs around \$ 10 and up. If you buy this accessory, the price of AirTag will be close to \$ 50.



Due to not being able to buy a holster in time, I used the 'bare' AirTag, and immediately understood why a holster was needed. In less than a day of use, leaving this accessory in the backpack and wallet compartment, both the aluminum and plastic sides of AirTag have had scratches.

Actually scratches will not affect the function of the device, but for those who require high looks, these are still the points to pay attention.

Well done the main function

Connecting AirTag to iPhone is very simple. Just bring the accessory close, the machine will automatically recognize and the setup process takes only about 30 seconds. This is a big plus compared to other finder devices.

To find items attached to AirTag, users have 3 ways. First, they can go to the Find My app, choose to show up on the map to see the last recorded location. If you are in the same apartment, you can press the speaker button to let the AirTag play the sound.

The third method only applies to iPhone 11 onwards, allowing the display of the direction and distance to the nearby AirTag.

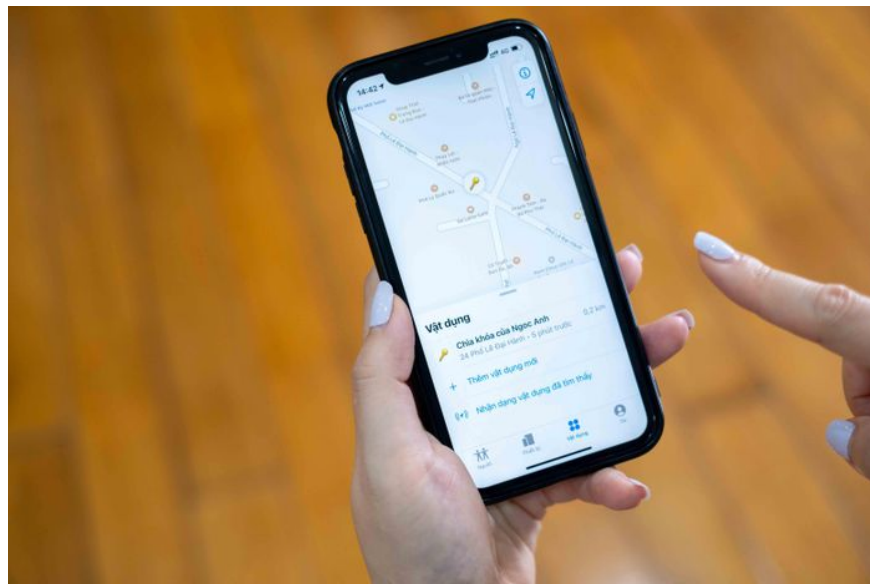


The Find My network with billions of devices running iOS is a huge advantage of AirTag. No need GPS or network connection, users can still find the AirTag when it is near any iOS device. Testing in city conditions, I found the position of AirTag on the map was quite accurate.

The challenge comes when you want to find the AirTag nearby. The AirTag's 'speakers' are in fact the white plastic side of this device. When you select a sound feature, the plastic face vibrates to create sound.

This sound is only enough to be heard in an apartment, when the background noise is quite small. If you search inside a multi-story house, or assume your family member has the TV turned on quite loudly, you will be hard pressed to hear AirTag.

This is why you should not leave AirTag inside your wallet too tight. At that time, the volume of AirTag emitted will be much smaller, reducing the efficiency when searching.



The UWB wave precision search is also useful, but efficiency depends on the environment. When I tried to leave AirTag in the living room of a 2 bedroom apartment, my iPhone frequently reported 'low signal' when I went

into one of the bedrooms. Only when the distance is less than 4 m, and there is no barrier between the iPhone and the AirTag, can the device be able to accurately indicate the distance and direction.

Combining all 3 of these features, the ability to find lost items will increase significantly when attached to AirTag. However, there are still environments where AirTag is not very efficient, like in a large apartment, or in the middle of a crowded shopping mall. The device is also not suitable if you want to leave it on your motorbike to look in the parking lot, as cheaper and louder accessories are available.

It would be disastrous if AirTag was misused

At launch, Apple made it clear that the AirTag was an 'accessory to track things, not to track people'. The company also integrates a number of features so that users know when someone else's AirTag comes with them.

However, in practice these features all have vulnerabilities. The current AirTag can still be used to spy on others.

The first way AirTag notices is sound. According to Apple, after 'a while', if an AirTag is separated from its host device, it will squeal to get attention. The company did not specify how long that period was.



According to the Washington Post, it took three days since the last time away from the owner, the AirTag cried for about 15 seconds, and then every few hours. The 3-day period is quite a long time for AirTag owners to keep track of the places the victims visit. Besides, reducing the sound of an AirTag is not difficult.

If detecting an AirTag that is not with the same account but has been nearby for a long time, the user's iOS device will also pop up a message stating that there is a strange AirTag. The victim can press play to find the strange AirTag, but cannot access the map or find the exact same as the official AirTag.

However, in my hands-on experience carrying the strange AirTag all day, I never get a notification on my iPhone. Also, if the victim uses an Android phone, they won't receive any notifications.



That's not to mention if the AirTag owner is spying on a relative and knows their iPhone's password, that person can go into the Find My app and turn off notification when it detects a strange AirTag.

Although Apple promises very well, AirTag can still be used as a tracking device for others. In the future, the company may update to reduce the alarm interval or adjust the notification feature. At present, AirTag still has many major vulnerabilities that can be exploited for the wrong purpose.

Should I buy AirTag?

If you are an iPhone user and forgetful, AirTag will be a very useful accessory, especially with important objects. The price of nearly 1 million is not high compared to the effort of redoing papers in your wallet, or hitting a car key.

AirTag can be said to be a huge reason iPhone users continue to stick with Apple's ecosystem. However, if you do not use an iPhone, there are many other options on the market, with prices as low as half the Samsung SmartTag or Baseus Intelligent T3.

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