



March 5, 2011

IRS Produces Own Smartphone App

In the world of smartphones and mobile devices, the IRS has entered the fray by producing its own tax app (that's 'application' for you non-geeks). The IRS tax app is called IRS2Go and allows smartphone app users to get updates on their income tax refunds — and enter their e-mail address so that they can receive daily advice. If you use Apple smartphones, you can download the IRS2Go app at the Apple App Store whereas Android users can go to the Android Marketplace. And it's free, too.

You can even get free daily tax tips from the IRS app such as education tax tips and a whole range of others. As for tracking your tax refunds, if you file electronically can use the IRS app within 72 hours after the IRS acknowledges receipt of their tax submission. For paper return submissions, you'd have to wait three to four weeks. This would be the same time frame you would have to wait if you to the IRS website, www.irs.gov and clicked on "Where's My Refund?"

To use the app, you would have to enter your Social Security number. But rest assured, the IRS says the Social Security number is masked and encrypted. You're not filing tax returns using that IRS app.

However, the TurboTax SnapTax app does allow you to file your tax returns via your smartphone. To do so, you would need to take a snapshot of your W-2 Form using your smartphone and submit it using the app. Again, the entire process is protected by a sophisticated encryption technology.

Although most of these tax apps are available for free, you should be careful about how you receive it. If you receive such an 'app' through an email prompting you to open an attachment to download your app, you should delete such emails. They are highly likely to be bogus and part of some phishing scheme. Some apps can also disclose your phone's location to other parties.

But according to Luiz D. Garcia, IRS spokesman, the IRS app would never be used to track your location or reveal your personal details to others.