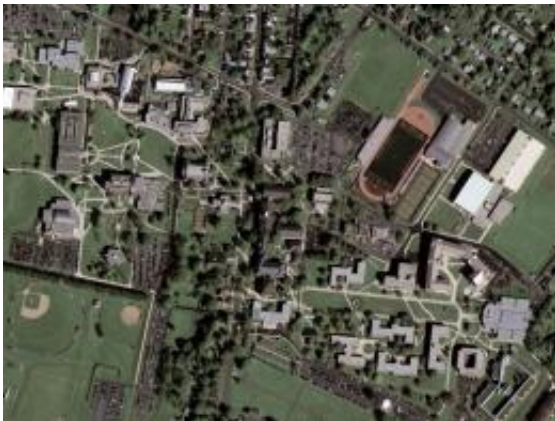


California politician wants to censor online maps

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A photograph issued by online mapping firm GeoEye-1. An elected California official wants the state known for Internet technology to blur images of schools, hospitals, government buildings and houses of worship in online maps.

An elected California official wants the state known for Internet technology to blur images of schools, hospitals, government buildings and houses of worship in online maps.

Southern California assemblyman Joel Anderson, a Republican, is backing a bill that would call for Internet mapping services to obscure such images or face daily fines of 250,000 dollars.

"Sensitive areas that could be potential soft targets for terrorists or hate crime perpetrators should not be available on the internet at a level of

detail that poses a serious security risk," Anderson said Friday in an email to AFP.

He cited reports that pictures of former prime minister Tony Blair's home in London were recently removed from a [Street View](#) feature in [Google maps](#) that provides users with 360-degree images of locations.

Anderson also said that Street View pictures of the House of Commons and other British government buildings were "blackened out."

Google has said publically that it does not take it on itself to edit images at its free online mapping service but that it does delete or obscure pictures at requests from property owners or officials running government facilities.

"In the United Kingdom, Google blacked out key government buildings from their Street View service," Anderson said.

"I have proposed a bill, AB 255, that would require all Internet mapping sites to take the same precautions with California government buildings, places of worship, schools and hospitals."

The bill, which Anderson introduced in February, would make it state law for online mapping services to blur images of designated "sensitive" locations, whether the pictures were taken at street level, from the air, or by satellites.

Anderson concedes that his fledgling bill needs to be refined, but argues that it is part of a growing international trend by governments to curb risks of terrorists using online mapping services to plan attacks.

The official maintains that he is not opposed to online maps, but believes only those up to evil deeds are interested in details such as positioning of

entrances, windows and air ducts.

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