

Apple dispatches fleet of cars to get map service data

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For years, a Street View team has been ranging the world for Google Maps. Following in its tracks, Apple promised to safeguard privacy while gathering mapping data on the road.

"For example, we will blur faces and license plates on collected images prior to publication," Apple said in an online post.

Google took to blurring faces and car license plate numbers in Street View imagery at its [mapping service](#) due to privacy concerns.

The Street View team has collected pictures in cities around the world as well as in remote locales such as the Canadian Arctic and Brazilian rain forests.

Apple's move comes as people increasingly use

smartphones, and now smartwatches, for navigation as well as to find nearby offerings such as shops, restaurants or tourist attractions.

Referring customers to businesses provides money-making opportunities for mapping services.

Senior vice president of software engineering Craig Federighi said at the company's annual gathering of software developers this week that Apple is investing heavily in maps and that usage is soaring.

He also showed off a version of Apple Maps devoted to getting around using public transit and enhanced with Siri virtual assistant technology so people can get directions by simply asking.

"We taught Siri all about transit," Federighi said while highlighting [map](#) service improvements that will be included in the coming version of software powering Apple mobile devices.

Apple Maps will also locate nearby merchants, and display whether they handle transactions using the Apple Pay digital wallet.

Apple has been improving its map service since it launched in 2012 with so many glitches that chief executive Tim Cook apologized publicly.

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