



Tapping technology for pest control



Google Earth,
Google Maps
and Google
Street View

The details available in today's web-based mapping systems are remarkable. Google is not the only supplier of web mapping apps (Apple is just one competitor), but it is arguably the most widely used. *Google Earth* and *Google Maps* superimpose onto detailed street maps images obtained from satellite imagery, aerial photography and GIS 3D globe. *Google Street View* is a technology featured in *Google Maps* and *Google Earth* that provides panoramic 360-degree, 3D street-level views, not views from above. By using the "pegman" icon, the "virtual you" can view and navigate around streets and through the neighbourhood just as though you were in a car or walking. You can even zoom in to study a storm drain or a dumpster. *Street View* also has panoramic indoor views of some businesses which could help with inspections. These free apps can be used on computers, and on many smart phones and tablets.

Some pest control uses for these Google mapping apps are obvious: mapping your way to your customers, establishing efficient routes, finding a coffee shop. But some you may not have thought of, such as identifying possible nearby pest breeding and feeding sites. With Google maps, you can do part of your site inspection before you even leave the office. Before you head for that customer, type in its address and check out the surrounding area. Knowing what is going on around your client's property ahead of time can be

Mosquito Mapping- Often, mosquitoes biting your clients are breeding off the property. Using the map apps, you can see that the foreclosed house next door has a "green" pool in the yard that looks like its half full of scummy water- and is a likely source of mosquitoes. Mapping apps can help you find nearby areas of marsh, street drains, containment ponds, and ditches. These can be further investigated for possible community mosquito control action or to sell mosquito control services.

Fly Mapping- Many types of nuisance flies breed in large numbers in one site but fly in to your client's property to cause problems. Mapping apps can help you find these breeding sites and sometimes help you develop plans for their management. By checking *Google Street View*, you might see that overflowing dumpster behind the fence adjoining your client's property. A mapping app might help you find drain flies from a sewage treatment plant across the road, and flesh flies breeding in the yard of a neighbour who keeps horses.

Rodent Mapping- The key to controlling rats is to determine where they feed and nest. Since they commonly travel hundreds of meters between nesting and feeding sites, mapping apps can help you locate potential problem areas near your client such as trash transfer stations, food plants or stores, commercial dumpster areas, storm drains, kennels, railroad

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priceless. You might be surprised at what you find. You just have to remember that the maps are not real-time. Most *Google Earth* images are 1-3 years old and conditions may have changed- or maybe not. The date of the mapping is shown at the bottom of the screen.

embankments, grain mills, auto junkyards, etc. Nearby agricultural fields can be the source of large numbers of rats, but also mice and other rodents that disperse when the crops are harvested.

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