

Google Problem

Go to www.google.com on the Internet, enter your phone number, and see what you get. If you're LUCKY, you won't get anything. If you're NOT, you'll get a link to a map right to your front door!!!!

There is a new feature making it possible to type a telephone number into Google's search bar, click the search button, and have a Map Quest page returned as a result. Any person wishing to discover the physical location of a phone number, be it a home or business address, could use this feature to locate a physical street address, and receive explicit directions on how to get there from anywhere in the country.

Try it. In your Internet browser, type www.google.com in the web address line. When you get to Google, type in your telephone number (for example 256-760-6363). It will show your name and address and give you two map options: Yahoo and Map Quest. Try one of them and note how quickly and accurately the map appears that is linked to your phone number.

Obviously, the easy availability of this information can be abused. It is a bit scary that any "Tom, Dick, or Harry" can so easily obtain a direct map to your house just by having your phone number. Granted, there are other websites that can be used to match a phone number with a name and address, but this one makes it too quick and easy.

The good news:

Google has made available an option that will allow anyone to remove the telephone number from the database that is linked to the mapping feature. You will first need to check if your number is listed in this manner by attempting a search, entering your full telephone number separated by dashes (e.g., 404-524-5811).

If the number appears in the mapping database, an icon resembling a telephone will appear next to the first or second entry on the results. Clicking on this icon will take you to a page containing a description of the service and a link to request your number be removed from the database. It is really easy to remove your name & address. Just takes a minute to submit the form (although it appears the removal of your phone number is not immediate).