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New iPhone app, Offender Locator, uses GPS to locate registered sex offenders near where users live

BY [Oren Yaniv](#)

DAILY NEWS STAFF WRITER

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Call it the iPerv.

New [iPhone](#) applications that allow users to easily locate nearby registered sex offenders are a big hit, helping perturbed parents track down predators.

An app called Offender Locator, which has been out for two months, was No. 3 on the iPhone Store's top-seller list Monday.

It uses the phone's built-in Global Positioning System to display a list of sex crime convicts in a given location.

"They know where you and your family are," an ad for the product warns ominously. "Now it's time to turn the tables."

A competing program dubbed SOS (for Sex Offenders Search) was released late last week to rave reviews. Its interactive map lets users simply tap on the screen and get more information and a picture of a potential perv.

"The more sunlight we hit sex offenders with, the less space they can crawl into," said [City Councilman Peter Vallone \(D-Queens\)](#), who heads the Public Safety Committee.

Trip Wakefield, CEO of ThinAir Wireless, which released Offender Locator, called his product "a convenience tool."

It costs 99 cents, a dollar less than SOS. Both use information that is available free online.

The mobile device can come in handy for home hunters or parents at a new playground.

Not everybody's happy.

"It's a dangerous thing," said [Derek Logue](#), who runs a support Web site for sex offenders.

He said it could increase vigilantism, and noted that some registries include people who pose little danger.

He also blasted the companies for selling free information.

"Not only sex sells - but sex offenders sell," Logue said.

[Roberto Franceschetti](#), who came up with the SOS app, knows that. He sold 2,000 of them in five days.

"This was our first [iPhone app]," he said. "Seeing the response, it won't be our last."

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