

Google bows to pressure for German Street View

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Visitors stand in front of Google logos at a fair in 2007. Google has bowed to demands in Germany to do more to protect people's privacy ahead of the launch of its Street View service here, officials said on Wednesday.

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Street View, available for cities in the United States, Japan, Australia and in some parts of Europe, allows users to view panoramic still photos at street level, with the faces of passers-by and car number plates blurred out.

But German officials wanted it to also make people, their cars and their homes unidentifiable in the raw data held on record -- but not published

on the Internet -- by the company.

Google has now agreed to do so, provided that people apply for their faces or number plates to be blocked out, said Johannes Caspar, the top data protection official in Hamburg, where Google Germany is based.

"Google has used the opportunity in good time to agree to our compromise proposal on all points," Caspar said in a statement.

"Originally we wanted them to agree to block out in all its raw data but we are happy with this result."

He added that although there was no way of verifying what happens to the raw data once it is at Google headquarters in the United States, he "fully expects" the firm to live up to its promises.

"[Street View](#)" has also hit problems in other European countries.

Greece last month barred [Google](#) from taking any more photographs on the nation's streets until it disclosed how long it intends to keep the images and what steps it is taking to alert residents liable to be photographed.

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