

Google pledges more blurring in Switzerland

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A Google Street View camera on top of a car at the Prinsengracht in Amsterdam, The Netherlands, in March, 2009. German authorities demanded Wednesday that US Internet giant Google bolster its privacy protection measures before it offers pictures of German city streets on its popular Street View service.

(AP) -- Google Inc. said Wednesday its Street View service will blur some pictures from Switzerland even more after a Swiss official said the images were violating the country's strict privacy laws.

The blurring of people's faces and license numbers will be significantly improved, said Peter Fleischer, Google's global privacy counsel.

The company has worked hard to fulfill demands by the Swiss data protection official, Fleischer told reporters in a telephone conference.

"Google is convinced that Street View is completely legal," he added.

Street View lets people view street-level pictures over the Internet. Since launching in 2007, it has expanded to more than 100 cities worldwide but has faced privacy complaints from many individuals and institutions that have been photographed.

Fleischer said Switzerland's Federal Data Protection Commissioner, Hanspeter Thuer, is now assessing Google's proposals. Thuer could not immediately be reached for comment.

Last week, Thuer demanded that Google take off the Internet any [Street View](#) images of Switzerland because he said it was failing to obscure people's identities on the [mapping service](#) and was therefore in breach with [privacy](#) laws.

Many faces and license numbers in the service weren't blurred or were done so inadequately, he said. Thuer subsequently met with [Google](#) to discuss the problem.

Fleischer said the changes in the images of faces will first be introduced in Switzerland and subsequently in other countries.

License numbers will only be more blurred in Switzerland because the letters and numbers are bigger than on other countries' license plates, he said, adding that the improvements can be done within a few weeks.

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