

# Google, Germany bury hatchet over 'Street View'

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The camera of a Google street-view car, used to photograph whole streets, is seen at the world's biggest high-tech fair in Hanover in March 2010. Germany said Friday that Google had agreed to address thorny privacy concerns before launching its Street View navigation service in the country, ending a row between the firm and Berlin.

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Google "has agreed to start its new 'Street View' service only when all the objections raised by citizens have been fully taken into account," said Consumer Protection Minister Ilse Aigner in a statement after talks.

Street View, already available for cities in the United States, Japan, Australia and some parts of Europe, allows users to view on the Web panoramic still photos at street level taken using specially equipped vehicles.

The groundbreaking technology, launched in the United States in 2007, has given rise to privacy concerns in Germany, which is especially sensitive to the issue due to abuses by the Nazis and communists in the past.

Officials were concerned that thieves could use pictures of private houses to gain illegal access and that photos of people were being published without their consent.

But before the service can go live in Germany, the firm has promised to black out properties if individuals raise concerns and also to make faces unrecognisable.

"What is private must remain private," said the minister.

A Google spokesman told AFP that the firm still intended to launch [Street View](#) in Germany this year. "There will be no delay," he said.

German officials have also demanded that Google stop collecting information about private "WiFi" wireless Internet networks with its special cars.

[Google](#) responded that it was not the only firm to be doing this and that German companies were carrying out similar operations.

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