

# German gov't considers 'Street View' concerns

August 18 2010, By GEIR MOULSON , Associated Press Writer

---

(AP) -- The German government will consider new rules to address the privacy implications of Internet services such as Google's "Street View," and plans a meeting next month with the California-based company and others, officials said Wednesday.

Google said earlier this month that it will introduce its mapping feature for 20 German cities before the end of the year, adding to concerns in the privacy-conscious country about the extent to which people's personal data are accessible on the Internet.

At authorities' insistence, [Google](#) has introduced an [online tool](#) that allows Germans to ask to have images of their homes removed. The company says it is doing more than legally required to protect people's privacy.

The issue landed on the government's agenda for Wednesday's Cabinet meeting after parliament's upper house called last month for tougher rules on such services.

Ministers decided to look at measures to "strengthen legal security on the Internet" by this fall, government spokesman Christoph Steegmans said.

He didn't elaborate on what that might entail, but said that any new legislation "must ensure a balance between the interests of data protection and economic interests."

Interior Minister Thomas de Maiziere plans to invite companies such as Google and Microsoft, as well as data protection and consumer protection officials, to a meeting Sept. 20 on "the opportunities and limits" of such mapping services, ministry spokesman Philipp Spauschus said.

The ministry will then present "proposed solutions" for handling those services, he added. De Maiziere appeared skeptical of rushing into legislation on the issue amid the current flap over "[Street View](#)," and pointed to contradictions in the German discussion.

In an interview with the daily Berliner Zeitung, he called for "caution in introducing blanket rules allowing objections."

"There are people who on the one hand tweet about their entire private life ... but on the other hand fight against their (home's) facade being photographed," de Maiziere was quoted as saying. "That is absurd. There need to be regulations on the matter - but we shouldn't become hysterical."

Germany's data protection watchdog, Peter Schaar, urged the government to come up quickly with new legislation including a "central objections register" which would allow people to ensure their personal data are kept off the Internet without having to go to individual companies.

"It cannot be that the right to object depends on the goodwill of the respective companies," Schaar said.

©2010 The Associated Press. All rights reserved. This material may not be published, broadcast, rewritten or redistributed.

Citation: German gov't considers 'Street View' concerns (2010, August 18) retrieved 9 April

2024 from <https://phys.org/news/2010-08-german-govt-street-view.html>

This document is subject to copyright. Apart from any fair dealing for the purpose of private study or research, no part may be reproduced without the written permission. The content is provided for information purposes only.