

Google defends its 'Street View' in Germany

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German Justice Minister Sabine Leutheusser-Schnarrenberger, left, and Interior Minister Thoman de Maiziere discuss prior to German government's cabinet meeting in Berlin, Germany, Wednesday, Aug. 18, 2010. The cabinet will discuss Google's upcoming launch of StreetView in Germany and the privacy concerns it has raised. German officials have been one of the harshest critics of the "Street View" program, which provides detailed photographs of neighborhoods taken by Google cameras. (AP Photo/Markus Schreiber)

(AP) -- Google Inc. is defending its "Street View" feature against sharp criticism in Germany saying it has gone a long way to address people's privacy concerns.

Google's vice president for Northern and Central Europe, Philipp Schindler, told Thursday's mass circulation daily Bild the company had found a unique data security agreement with German agencies as early as last year.

Schindler says that only in [Germany](#) are consumers given the right to opt out of having their homes shown on "[Street View](#)" before the feature has even started.

He says while Google is respecting people's privacy, "there is nothing more public than the outside of buildings."

Schindler says hundreds of thousands of Germans are using the feature to check out cities abroad.

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