

Czechs halt Google's 'Street View,' cite privacy

September 22 2010, By KAREL JANICEK , Associated Press Writer



In this July 9, 2008 file photo a google street view car drives near the Brandenburg Gate in Berlin, Germany. The Czech Republic's privacy watchdog said Wednesday Sept 22 2010 that Google has not been granted permission to expand its mapping feature "Street View" in their country because it invades peoples' privacy. The Office for Personal Data Protection last week refused Google Inc. the necessary registration for "Street View" in the eastern European country following an investigation that began in April but did not explain why.(AP Photo/dda, Michael Kappeler, file)

(AP) -- The Czech Republic has refused to grant Google permission to expand its "Street View" because the mapping feature invades peoples' privacy, the government's privacy watchdog said Wednesday.

Source: The Czech Office for Personal Data Protection has been investigating the issue since April, and last week it did not give Google Inc. the necessary registration for "[Street View](#)" in the eastern European

country but did not explain why.

Google at the time considered it a temporary decision. On Wednesday, the U.S. Internet giant said it was closely cooperating with the Czech government agency and providing all the details required to be allowed to continue in collecting data.

"Thanks to the ongoing cooperation, most conditions ... have been met," Google said in a statement.

But office head Igor Nemec said Google, while gathering the data, uses technology that "disproportionately invades citizens' privacy."

"Street View" provides [Internet users](#) with panoramic views and photographs of neighborhoods along many streets across the globe. It is popular but has been controversial in Germany, South Korea and other countries amid fears that people - filmed without their consent - could be seen doing things they want to keep private or being in places where they don't want to be seen.

Google also lost the trust of many in Europe this spring when it had to acknowledge that the technology used by its "[Street View](#)" cars had also vacuumed up fragments of people's online activities broadcast over public Wi-Fi networks for the past four years.

Nemec, the Czech official, said the 'Street View' cameras are placed too high - 9 feet (2.7 meters) tall - which allow them to see "over the fence" and into people's homes.

He said his office has received dozens of complaints from citizens. In one of them, a person claimed that a picture of his home be studied by a burglar, Nemec said.

Google said it was trying to have the cameras in a position to take best possible pictures while not to violate people's privacy.

It said it was ready to delete disputed images "in a very short time" after receiving a complaint.

Nemec said Wednesday that Google also does not have a proper legal representative on Czech territory to handle personal data. Google did not comment on that.

Google said it would collect no new data in the Czech Republic until the problem is solved, but that photos taken previously in Prague and other cities were still available.

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

Citation: Czechs halt Google's 'Street View,' cite privacy (2010, September 22) retrieved 27 April 2024 from <https://phys.org/news/2010-09-czechs-halt-google-street-view.html>

<p>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.</p>
--