

Google: 244,000 Germans say 'no' to Street View

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(AP) -- Internet giant Google says more than 244,000 Germans have asked that their homes be made unrecognizable in its Street View program, scheduled to launch in Germany next month.

Google estimated in a statement released Thursday that the requests amount to about 3 percent of the total number of households in Germany's 20 largest cities, images of which are to go online as part of the company's mapping program.

"The high number of objections to Google Street View shows that citizens want to decide which data about themselves is published on the Internet," said Peter Schaar, the head of Germany's data protection watchdog.

German authorities had demanded that Google allow citizens to request the homes not be pictured in Street View, insisting that posting images of private residences on the Internet violated individual privacy.

Street View is currently available in 23 countries. Germany is the only one where citizens could request their homes be removed before the program went online.

The company warned Thursday that while it was taking care to make sure that all requests are honored, "it cannot be guaranteed that every application that we have received can be fully processed. For example in cases where the address given is not clear."

[Google](#) will also provide a tool for anyone requesting to have images captured in Street View to be made unrecognizable. The tool will be made available when the service goes online.

Street View has been disputed in Germany, South Korea and elsewhere amid fears that people - filmed without their consent - could be seen on the footage doing things they didn't want to be seen doing or in places where they didn't want to be seen.

The California-based company 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.

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