

After bitter row, Google launches Street View in Germany

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Street View users were able to see the rolling hills, tree-lined streets and quaint wooden houses of the tiny town of Oberstaufen in Bavaria, south Germany.

In contrast to the fevered debate leading up to the service's launch, the town, which relies heavily on tourism, welcomed its introduction, even

baking a cake to mark the arrival.

"For tourists, it can only be an advantage if they can already get detailed information about their holiday on the Internet before they book," said Andrea Presser, from the town's tourism office.

[Street View](#), available in around 20 countries, allows users to "walk" through towns and cities using photos taken by specially-equipped vehicles.

But it ran into fierce opposition in Germany, both from privacy campaigners and some politicians.

Although Germans are avid users of Street View images from other countries, the planned roll-out here caused alarm in a country particularly sensitive to [privacy concerns](#) due to the gross abuses under the Nazi and communist regimes.

As a special concession to these concerns, Google allowed people to "opt out" of the service, promising to pixelate their house. The firm announced on October 21 that nearly a quarter of a million Germans had done this.

Some houses in Oberstaufen were indeed blurred.

[Google](#) plans to roll out the service for Germany's 20 largest cities later this year, including Berlin, Frankfurt, Munich and Hamburg.

The US firm also offered used a "little tour of Germany" taking in six important sites in the country, including the office of Chancellor Angela Merkel in Berlin and football team Bayern Munich's stadium.

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