

# FCC drops Google 'Street View' investigation

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This file photo shows a special camera, designed to take photos for Google's 'Street View' mapping service. US government telecom regulators have ended an investigation into the service gathering data from private wireless hotspots.

US government telecom regulators have ended an investigation into Google's "Street View" online mapping service gathering data from private wireless hotspots.

The Federal Communication Commission (FCC) enforcement bureau on Friday called for Google to pay a \$25,000 penalty for stalling the probe but said that it could not accuse the [Internet giant](#) of breaking US law.

"We worked in good faith to answer the FCC's questions throughout the inquiry, and we're pleased that they have concluded that we complied with the law," Google spokesperson Niki Fenwick said in response to an AFP inquiry.

The FCC began the investigation in late 2010 after Google announced that Street View cars taking photographs of cities in more than 30 countries had inadvertently gathered data sent over unsecured Wi-Fi systems.

Information sucked up by passing Street View cars included passwords, emails, and other data that was being transmitted wirelessly over unprotected routers, according to the FCC.

Google has since stopped the collection of Wi-Fi data, used to provide location-based services such as [driving directions](#) in Google Maps and other products, by Street View cars.

Street View, which was launched in 2006, lets users view panoramic street scenes on [Google Maps](#) and take a virtual "walk" through cities such as New York, Paris or Hong Kong.

The FCC contended that Google delayed the investigation by ignoring requests for internal information such as emails related to Street View data collection and the names of employees who authorized or reviewed it.

"For many months, Google deliberately impeded and delayed the bureau's investigation by failing to respond to requests for material information," FCC enforcement bureau chief Michele Ellison said in a written report.

"Although a world leader in search capability, Google took the position that searching its employees' email 'would be a time consuming and burdensome task'," Ellison continued.

Similar reasoning was given for not wanting to dig up names or statements from [Google](#) workers who authorized the collection of Wi-Fi

data or analyzed information gathered, according to the FCC.

A key engineer behind the [Street View](#) data collection software was said to have exerted his legal right not to make any statements on the record to [investigators](#).

"Google's level of cooperation with this matter fell way short of what we expect and require," Ellison said while backing the decision to require the company to forfeit \$25,000 as punishment.

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