Google says sorry to Germany over 'Adolf Hitler Square'

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A screenshot made on January 10, 2014 from the Google Maps website shows an online map of Berlin with Theodor Heuss-Plazt Square resulting from a search of its Nazi-era name "Adolf Hitler"

Google apologised Friday after a major square in Berlin regained its Nazi-era name "Adolf Hitler" on its popular online Maps page for a few hours.

A spokeswoman for the German unit of the US Internet giant, Lena Wagner, told AFP that it was not immediately clear how a street at Theodor-Heuss-Platz in the west of the German capital had again

become "Adolf-Hitler-Platz" late Thursday, the name it bore from 1933 to 1947.

"We were made aware of a false and inappropriate street name on Google Maps and corrected it immediately," she said.

"We apologise for this mistake."

The Nazi leader's name was no longer visible on Google Maps on Friday, and a search for Adolf-Hitler-Platz again redirects users to Theodor-Heuss-Platz.

The square at the centre of a major roundabout was renamed after Hitler in 1933 and was to have played a prominent role in the planned "Germania" overhaul of the city into a "global capital" planned under the Third Reich.

Its name was changed after the war and finally given the name of Heuss, Germany's first post-war president, in 1963.

The error sparked outrage in social networks and German media, with the top-selling daily Bild demanding, "How could this happen?"

Reports said Google Maps for Germany had been hacked in the past, with Cologne's famous cathedral once made to disappear entirely.

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