



EU warns Google over photos on Street View **AP** Associated Press

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BRUSSELS, Belgium (AP) - The EU's top data protection supervisor said Thursday that Google Inc.'s "Street View" map and imaging feature could pose privacy problems if it launches in Europe.

Peter Hustinx said the Internet map service program would have to comply with European privacy laws as it captures and posts street-level photos.

"I would encourage Google to think about how to do this," Hustinx told reporters. "Making pictures on the street is in many cases not a problem, but making pictures everywhere is certainly going to create some problems. I'm quite sure they are aware of this."

Responding to privacy concerns in the United States, Google has said it will automatically blur faces of people captured in photos taken for the program. The service was not the first to augment online maps with photos, but the detail and breadth of images on the site surprised and unsettled many users when it launched last year.

Google spokesman Larry Yu said Google hopes to head off legal or cultural objections that might emerge as Street View expands into other countries.

An EU report last month on search engines recommended they change their practices to meet European data retention and privacy rules.

"Complying with European data protection law is going to be part of their business success or failure," Hustinx said. "If they would ignore it, it is likely to lead to (court) cases, and I think they would be hit hard."

Although the EU's 28 privacy officers, including Hustinx, have no policy powers, their stance can lead to action by the EU's executive commission and by national authorities that enforce European data protection rules.

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