

# The Swiss reject Google Street View

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Switzerland's privacy regulator plans on taking Internet giant Google before federal court to modify its Street View application within the country. The GPS service has been criticized in the past because of the identification of individuals without their consent. The largest problem with the street view service seems to be that the Google's vehicle operates a camera that can peer into enclosed and sensitive areas.

The privacy issue has been persistent in Europe with Greece, England and Germany all imploring Google to use more privacy safeguards concerning street view.

Switzerland, with its long standing strict privacy laws has been the first country to take Google to litigation. The Swiss terms are as follows: Google must ensure all faces and license plates are blurred, enclosed areas cannot be photographed, and an announcement must be made at least one week in advance when photographs are being taken and put on the Internet.

Privacy regulators are also demanding that Google take no more pictures in Switzerland, and all photographs that are uploaded currently, must be taken down until the court proceedings can terminate.

Google states that it is disappointed by the accusations and plans on boldly defending its position.

The easiest solution to the privacy issue is the promotion of Google's personal photography upload service. The service is already in use, but with enough photographs, there is no need for the street view application. Google needs to strengthen the combination of personal photography and Google Maps. This way, you always have consent from the parties involved, and Google cannot be held responsible for the content of the submitted photos. It's win, win.

Switzerland's stand against Google is a step in the right direction for Europe concerning personal privacy. The EU remains one of the most monitored blocs in the world. Surveillance has become almost Orwellian in parts of England. Swiss privacy regulators see this, and don't want it happening to their country as well.

Maybe the U.S. needs to take some notes too. New York City, using taxpayer money has just installed a multitude of surveillance equipment all over the city. I am not saying that there is no need to monitor the public for safety reasons, but the proper governance is needed to be sure that power is not abused.