



Google ceases violation of privacy law

Press release, 13 September 2011

Today, Google announced that it will discontinue activities which contravene the Dutch Data Protection Act. This reaction follows the decision of 22 July 2011 by the Dutch Data Protection Authority to maintain its previous administrative orders for incremental penalty payments.

Read the  [final findings of the Dutch DPA's investigation](#) (10,7 MB) and the previous press communiqués of [19 April 2011](#) and [11 August 2011](#).

Google will comply with the Dutch DPA's order that Google should offer users a possibility to opt-out in order to enable them to object to the processing of data concerning their WIFI routers effectively and free of costs. As Google announced today, this opt-out will be implemented world wide. In addition, Google will, as ordered by the Dutch DPA, inform Dutch users offline as well as online about the data concerning WIFI routers collected by Street View cars for the purpose of its geolocation service. In addition, Google will irrevocably erase the SSID's which have already been collected in the Netherlands.

On 22 July 2011, the Dutch DPA decided to maintain its previous decision to impose a penalty on Google. Google had officially objected to the orders.

Those administrative orders were issued by the Dutch DPA on 23 March 2011, following an investigation of the way Google collected data originating from WIFI routers. The investigation showed that between 4 March 2009 and 6 May 2010 Google collected data concerning 3,6 million WIFI routers, secured as well as unsecured, in the Netherlands with the use of its Street View cars. The company also calculated the geolocation for each of those routers. In doing so, Google contravened the Dutch Data Protection Act. In the given context, MAC addresses combined with a calculated geolocation are personal data, because the data can provide information on the router's owner.