

## Google Failed to Delete Street View Data in France

By ERIC PFANNER

Published: July 31, 2012

PARIS — The French data protection authorities asked Google on Tuesday to examine private information that cars taking pictures for its Street View service collected, after Google acknowledged that it had retained some of the information despite promising to delete it.

The request by the French privacy protection agency, known as the C.N.I.L., followed a similar one last week from the Information Commissioner's Office of Britain.

The C.N.I.L. fined the company €100,000, or \$120,000, in March 2011 for collecting private e-mail messages, computer passwords and other personal data as its cars took pictures for Google's Street View feature, a case that prompted privacy investigations around the world.

“Like its British counterpart, the C.N.I.L. has asked Google to make available the data in question and to keep it secure while the necessary investigations are conducted,” the agency said.

In a letter responding to the British information commissioner, Steve Eckersley, Google's global privacy counsel, Peter Fleischer, said the continued existence of the data had come to light during a “comprehensive manual review of our Street View disk inventory.”

The company added in a statement Tuesday: “Google has recently confirmed that it still has in its possession a portion of payload data collected by our Street View vehicles. Google apologizes for this error. Google would now like to delete the remaining data.”

Google has said that it never intended to collect the data, saying it was the result of mistakes by an engineer working on the Street View program. The company had promised to destroy the information but last week acknowledged it had not actually deleted all of it.

The U.S. Federal Communications Commission concluded an investigation into the matter in April, saying Google had “deliberately impeded and delayed” the inquiry. The agency fined the company \$25,000, but determined that it had not violated data protection laws.

The British information commissioner said in November 2010 that Google's collection of the data was a “significant breach” of British privacy laws, though the company was not fined. In June, the commissioner's office opened a new investigation into the matter.

“The I.C.O. is clear that this information should never have been collected in the first place and the company’s failure to secure its deletion as promised is cause for concern,” the office said in a statement.

A version of this article appeared in print on August 1, 2012, in The International Herald Tribune.