

Date: Tue, 24 Jul 2012 15:52:04 +1000
Subject: Re: Face blurring on YouTube
From: Ishtar Vij <ishtarv@google.com>
To: Dan Svantesson <dasvante@bond.edu.au>
Cc: "iflynn@google.com" <iflynn@google.com>, APF Board <apfboard@privacy.org.au>

Dear Professor Svantesson

Thank you for your letter of 20 July 2012.

Google is always interested in your feedback and the feedback of its users more generally. As you know, we have formed a user engagement group, of which the APF is a member. We inform this group by email of relevant product developments as they arise, which provides prompt notice of developments. It also provides members with some information to work from if the media contacts them for comment, as well as providing a clear point of contact at Google. In addition, this group meets in person approximately twice a year. We want to provide accurate information to organisations like the APF in a timely fashion, in a way that is effective and efficient for all of our organisations.

We appreciate your feedback that the recently announced ability to blur faces on YouTube videos could prove very useful. We also appreciate your query in relation to the original, unblurred videos that a user uploads to YouTube.

As you note, we give the uploader of the video the choice of whether or not to delete the unblurred video. The user is presented with this choice as they upload the video to YouTube. They are also given a link to further information in the <<http://support.google.com/youtube/bin/static.py?hl=en&guide=1388381&page=guide.cs&answer=2640535>>YouTube Help Centre.

Where a user chooses to delete the unblurred video, this is deleted almost immediately. Once a video is deleted it is gone from our servers. If a user chooses not to delete an unblurred video then, like all law-abiding companies, we will respect valid legal processes in countries where we operate, including valid court orders and subpoenas.

Google has a legal team whose job is to scrutinise data requests and make sure they meet not only the letter but the spirit of the law. When possible and legal to do so, we also notify users about requests for user data that may affect them. We have a history of being an advocate for user privacy. In 2006, we went to court to resist a Department of Justice subpoena for millions of search queries on the grounds that it was excessive and invaded our users' privacy. The judge ultimately ruled in Google's favour, establishing an important precedent for user privacy.

Also, we are the first major company to release data about the number of requests for user data we receive from various governments in order to provide users with more information about these issues. You can find out more at <<http://www.google.com/transparencyreport/userdatarequests/>> [google.com/transparencyreport/](http://www.google.com/transparencyreport/).

We thank you again for your feedback. I hope to see you at our next in person meeting of the user engagement group.

Kind regards

Ishtar

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