

# Google to offer public Wi-Fi in NYC neighborhood (Update)

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New York City Mayor Michael Bloomberg speaks during a news conference, Tuesday, Jan. 8, 2013 in New York. Google and The Chelsea Improvement Company say they'll provide free public Wi-Fi in Manhattan's southwest Chelsea neighborhood. (AP Photo/Mary Altaffer)

Google said Tuesday it is teaming up with a New York City neighborhood business group to provide the company's first urban Wi-Fi network.

The network will be available free to about a 10-block area surrounding Google's offices in Manhattan's Chelsea neighborhood, where Google has more than 3,000 employees. The area also is home to other tech companies, as well as high-end hotels and nightclubs and a housing project with more than 2,000 tenants.

"Google is proud to provide free Wi-Fi in the neighborhood we have called home for over six years," said Ben Fried, Google's chief information officer, who joined New York City Mayor Michael Bloomberg and U.S. Sen. Charles Schumer for the announcement.

Google has free Wi-Fi in Mountain View, California, where it is based, and in a handful of cities where it has data centers such as Council Bluffs, Iowa, and The Dalles, Oregon.

In New York, Google and the Chelsea Improvement Company are paying for the network, which cost \$115,000 to set up and will cost \$45,000 a year to operate. Wi-Fi, which allows for a connection to the Internet without the use of cellular service, would be free outdoors and in some indoor spaces such as a senior center.

Schumer said it would make sense to wire the entire city, and Bloomberg said Schumer should secure the U.S. federal funds to do it. The mayor, the billionaire founder of Bloomberg LLC, has tried to position New York as a high-tech center to rival Silicon Valley.

Fried noted that New York is Google's second-largest office in the world.

"Second is not a word we like," Bloomberg said. "You could make it your biggest office and we would be thrilled."

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