

Free voice calls merged into Google Hangouts app

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Google begins letting people use its Hangouts message application for mobile devices to make free or low-cost voice calls over the Internet

Google on Wednesday began letting people use its Hangouts message application for mobile devices to make free or low-cost voice calls over the Internet.

"Hangouts already makes it easy to send a quick message, or start a

group video chat," Google product manager Amit Fulay said in a blog post.

"But, sometimes it's best to just call to say 'I love you,' and with the new version of Hangouts you can."

Google is essentially merging capabilities of its Voice online calling service with Hangouts, which became a hit feature in the technology titan's Google+ social network because of its free group video chat capabilities.

Calls are free between Hangouts users and to numbers in the United States or Canada, according to Fulay, who described international call rates as "really low."

Hangouts calls will be available in the new version of the application tailored for mobile devices powered by Google-backed Android software.

On Apple devices or desktop computers, Hangouts calls should be possible when the updated applications are used.

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