

## Uber sets up mobile development team in Amsterdam (Update)

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Uber, the San Francisco-based ride sharing company, has set up a mobile phone software development team in Amsterdam, its international headquarters.

In a telephone interview Conrad Whelan—Uber's second employee and first engineer—said Thursday he has begun working with a team of 10 Dutch mobile software experts immediately and hopes to expand that number to 30 or 40 in the coming year.

Whelan said one of the reasons to choose Amsterdam is that it will allow the company to draw staff from "across Europe."

"I think the biggest reason is just the combination of design and engineering talent that you have access to here," he said.

U.S. technology companies frequently complain of how difficult it is to obtain U.S. visas for top foreign engineers, and Uber must compete with Silicon Valley giants Google and Facebook when hiring staff.

Still, Uber's core development will remain in San Francisco, Whelan said.

There are other reasons why Uber chose Amsterdam. Although the arrival of the company—whose service aims to offer a cheaper way of matching drivers and riders than traditional taxi companies—has been met with protests in many European capitals, reaction has been muted in

Amsterdam.

That's in part because the company initially limited drivers to licensed chauffeurs. When Uber opened its service to all drivers in October, the transportation minister intervened to block it—a decision that's under appeal.

Regardless of the outcome, the Netherlands is already reviewing its relatively liberal taxi laws. Meanwhile, the country in general and Amsterdam in particular are attempting to profile themselves as welcoming to technology startups.

A nationwide law allowing work visas for non-Europeans who found startups is expected to go into effect Jan. 1.

Uber has come under scrutiny in recent weeks after a top executive suggested spending \$1 million to dig up dirt on a journalist that has written about the company. Uber has received coverage critical of its corporate culture and the alleged behavior of some of its drivers.

One driver was charged in San Francisco with assaulting a customer in June and the company is investigating one of its New York employees for tracking another journalist while who was using Uber.

Uber on Thursday announced that it raised another \$1.2 billion in financing, which will allow it to make "substantial investments," especially in Asia. In a blog post, CEO Travis Kalanick acknowledged the company's "significant growing pains."

"The events of the recent weeks have shown us that we also need to invest in internal growth and change," he wrote. "Acknowledging mistakes and learning from them are the first steps."

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