

Google launches Chat to compete with Apple's iMessage

April 23 2018, by Seung Lee, The Mercury News

Google is launching a new text messaging system for its Android platform to challenge Apple's iMessage in smartphone text messaging supremacy.

With Chat, Google is updating its current Short Messaging Service-run Android Messages app so that it can send and receive high-definition images and videos, set up group texts and allow reading receipts.

Chat is not a new text messaging app but rather a new set of features—known as Rich Communication Services designed to supplant the now 20-plus-year old SMS. Chat will be rolled into Android Messages in the near future.

Chat will be available to all worldwide cellular carriers that provide Android phones. But because Chat's implementation will be carrier-based, some likely will debut later than others, according to The Verge, which broke the news Friday. This is in contrast to its main competitor, iMessage, which is built into every iPhone sold.

In the United States, Sprint phones already support Chat between compatible Android devices and T-Mobile plans to roll out Chat in the second quarter of this year, according to The Verge. It is unclear when Verizon and AT&T will make the switch.

Unlike iMessage and other third-party messaging app, such as WhatsApp or Signal, Chat will not support end-to-end encryption, leaving the

messages less secure than its competitors.

"RCS continues to be a carrier-owned service, so legal intercept and other laws that exist that allow carriers to have access to the data continues to be the case," said Anil Sabharwal, who was in charge of building Chat for Google, to The Verge. Sabharwal led the team, which created the popular Google Photos.

With the advent of Chat, other Google projects in the space will be phased out. Allo, which was introduced by Google in 2016 as its latest messaging solution on Android, will see its development "paused", according to The Verge. Allo did not find traction among consumers as it only was downloaded by 50 million users, according to Sabharwal.

"We set out to build this thing, that it (would be) a product that we would get hundreds of millions of people to get excited about and use," Sabharwal said.

For the past decade, Google was on a long and circuitous path to develop a messaging system that will reach hundreds of millions of people on its platform. Allo was only the latest creation in its history, with products like Google Talk, Google Hangouts and Google Messenger launched to mixed results.

Meanwhile, Apple's iMessage soared soon after its release in 2011. While Apple has not disclosed iMessage's usage statistics, a Business Insider study from 2017 found iMessage to be the most popular [messaging](#) service for teenagers in the United States, as teenagers receive nearly twice as many messages on iMessage than Facebook Messenger and more than three times than Snapchat.

©2018 The Mercury News (San Jose, Calif.)
Distributed by Tribune Content Agency, LLC.

Citation: Google launches Chat to compete with Apple's iMessage (2018, April 23) retrieved 19 April 2024 from <https://phys.org/news/2018-04-google-chat-apple-imessage.html>

This document is subject to copyright. Apart from any fair dealing for the purpose of private study or research, no part may be reproduced without the written permission. The content is provided for information purposes only.