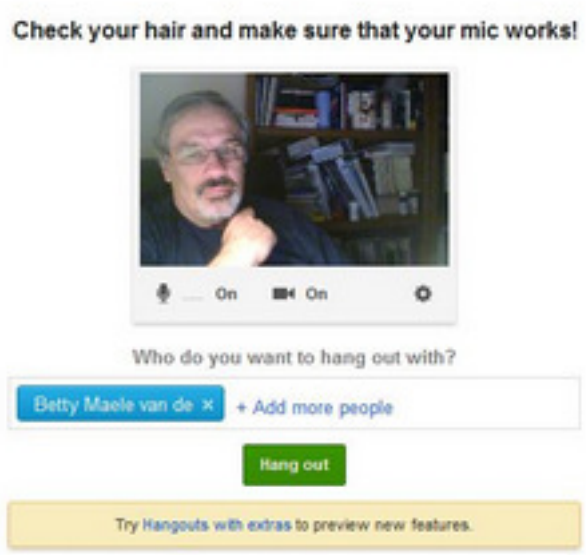


By launching the first apps from independent developers for the "Hangouts" video chat feature of Google+, Googleplex hopes to increase the time people spend on its social network and create a popular platform that will ultimately grow to hundreds of video apps, or more.

Hangouts allows up to 10 people to connect on a video chat. The service allows people to connect through a video chat, and a drawing pad embedded in the service allows participants to collaboratively draw colorful lines using their computer mouse.

A touch-screen version for iPad and other tablets is planned.

Vic Gundotra, the executive who heads the development of Google+, says "No one has ever done a multiuser video service for the whole world for free, let alone open it up to developers and see where they take it. It takes a company like Google, at Google's scale, to do something like this, and let's see what happens."

The Hangouts feature is "one of the four or five pillars that we have that really drive engagement," Gundotra told reporters. "It fundamentally changes the interaction when you can

see somebody's eyes, which is why we said social is much more than just status updates. That's why we invested so much in video technology."

Now you can play a game of Canasta through a video chat with a cousin in Italy and an aunt in New York, as well as other apps to play games or share documents.

Go Google+ Hangouts