



Inside This Issue:

This Week's Stories

[Microsoft Wins Landmark Appeal Over Seizure Of Foreign Emails](#)

[Comcast Moves On Verizon MVNO Deal With Creation Of Mobile Division](#)

Products & Services

[Japanese Chat App Line Scores Dual Listing And Biggest Tech IPO This Year](#)

[Vevo Wants To Be Your Go-To App For Music Videos](#)

Emerging Technology

[Pokémon Go To Go Global 'Soon' As Hit Game Launches In Three More Countries](#)

[Nest's Next Move Is A Step Into The Outdoor Home Security Market](#)

Mergers & Acquisitions

[Amazon Just Bought This Hot Cloud Startup](#)

[Google Acquires Content-Sharing Startup Kifi](#)

Industry Reports

[T-Mobile Touts Un-carrier Success, Tears Into Verizon In FCC Competition Filing](#)

[Google's Project Fi Boosts Data Speeds When Traveling Abroad](#)

This Week's Stories

Microsoft Wins Landmark Appeal Over Seizure Of Foreign Emails

July 14, 2016

A federal appeals court on Thursday said the U.S. government cannot force Microsoft Corp and other companies to turn over customer emails stored on servers outside the United States.

The 3-0 decision by the 2nd U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals in Manhattan is a defeat for the U.S. Department of Justice and a victory for privacy advocates and for technology companies offering cloud computing and other services around the world.

Circuit Judge Susan Carney said communications held by U.S. service providers on servers outside the United States are beyond the reach of domestic search warrants issued under the Stored Communications Act, a 1986 federal law.

"Congress did not intend the SCA's warrant provisions to apply extraterritorially," she wrote. "The focus of those provisions is protection of a user's privacy interests."

Microsoft had been challenging a warrant seeking emails stored on a server in Dublin, Ireland, in a narcotics case.

It was believed to be the first U.S. company to challenge a domestic search warrant seeking data held outside the country.

Thursday's decision reversed a July 2014 ruling by then-Chief Judge Loretta Preska of U.S. district court in Manhattan requiring Microsoft to turn over the emails. It also voided a contempt finding against the company.

"We obviously welcome today's decision," Brad Smith, Microsoft's president and chief legal officer, said in a statement.

He said the decision gives people more confidence to rely on their own countries' laws to protect their privacy, rather than worry about foreign interference, and helps ensure that "legal protections of the physical world apply in the digital domain."

Peter Carr, a Justice Department spokesman, said the agency was disappointed by the decision and reviewing its legal options.

"Free-For-All" Was Feared

The case has attracted strong interest from the technology and media sectors, amid concern that giving prosecutors expansive power to collect data outside the country could make it harder for U.S. companies to compete there.

Dozens of companies, organizations and individuals filed briefs supporting Microsoft's appeal, including the U.S. Chamber of Commerce, Amazon.com Inc, Apple Inc, Cisco Systems Inc, CNN, Fox News Network, Gannett Co and Verizon Communications Inc.

Had the court gone the other way, "it would have been like the Wild West, with no clear, stable legal rules applying," Greg Nojeim, senior counsel with the nonprofit Center for Democracy & Technology in Washington, D.C., said in an interview.

Microsoft had said the warrant could not reach emails on the Dublin server because U.S. law did not apply there.

The Redmond, Washington-based company also said enforcing the warrant could spark a global "free-for-all," where law enforcement authorities elsewhere might seize emails belonging to Americans and stored in the United States.

Modernizing A 30-Year-Old Law

Federal prosecutors countered that quashing warrants such as Microsoft's would impede their own law enforcement efforts.

But Judge Carney said limiting the reach of warrants serves "the interest of comity" that normally governs cross-border criminal investigations.

She said that comity is also reflected in treaties between the United States and all European Union countries, including Ireland, to assist each other in such probes.

Some law enforcement officials have said obtaining such assistance can, nonetheless, be cumbersome and time-consuming.

The Justice Department is working on a bilateral plan to streamline how U.S. and British authorities request data from companies in each other's country.

A bipartisan bill was introduced in the U.S. Senate in May to clarify when and where law enforcement may access electronic communications of U.S. citizens.

Circuit Judge Gerard Lynch, who concurred in the judgment, urged Congress to modernize the "badly outdated" 1986 law to strike a better balance between law enforcement needs and users' privacy interests and expectations.

Lynch said the law, as it stands now, lets Microsoft thwart an otherwise justified demand to turn over emails by the "simple expedient" of choosing to store them outside the United States.

"I concur in the result, but without any illusion that the result should even be regarded as a rational policy outcome, let alone celebrated as a milestone in protecting privacy," he wrote.

reuters.com

Comcast Moves On Verizon MVNO Deal With Creation Of Mobile Division

July 14, 2016

Comcast is finally gearing up to move on its MVNO deal with Verizon.

A company representative on Thursday confirmed Comcast has created a new Mobile Division which will operate under the leadership of former EVP of sales and marketing operations Greg Butz. Butz will report directly to Comcast Cable CEO Neil Smit.

.....
"A company representative on Thursday confirmed Comcast has created a new Mobile Division which will operate under the leadership of former EVP of sales and marketing operations Greg Butz."

The news was originally reported by MultiChannel News.

In addition to serving in Comcast's sales and marketing department, Butz also formerly worked on business development for Comcast Cellular Communications in the early 1990's. Comcast sold Comcast Cellular to SBC for \$1.7 billion in 1999.

According to Comcast's representative, the move follows Comcast's activation of its MVNO rights with Verizon. Comcast secured those rights as part of the sale of its spectrum to Verizon in 2011. Comcast also has an active MVNO agreement with Sprint, the representative said.

Comcast said the changes are part of its "testing and learning" phase leading up to the actual launch of services. The representative declined to give a timeline for deployment of wireless services, saying only that the company is "really early in the process" and will "continue to evaluate the space."

"We think the wireless represents a strong business opportunity for Comcast, but we're still in the testing and learning mode," the representative said.

Comcast's representative said it was possible the company's future wireless services would be bundled in with its other offerings, since many of its products are already bundled. Most Comcast customers subscribe to two or three products, the representative said.

Comcast is also making other moves in the wireless space.

The company has taken a paddle in the FCC's spectrum incentive auction under the name CC Wireless Investment LLC.

wirelessweek.com

Products & Services

Japanese Chat App Line Scores Dual Listing And Biggest Tech IPO This Year

July 15, 2016

Japan's Line saw its shares rocket on their Tokyo debut Friday, extending a strong start in New York the day before, and taking the value of the messaging app firm to \$8.6 billion in the year's biggest tech IPO.

The operator of the world's seventh most-used messaging app listed first in New York in a move widely seen as a sign of determination to challenge global peers and eventually expand beyond strongholds of Japan and Southeast Asia.

However, Line's 218 million global monthly active users pale in comparison to the 1 billion of market-leader WhatsApp and 900 million of Messenger, both owned by Facebook. Tencent Holdings' WeChat, which dominates in China, has 697 million.

"We're providing the same kind of services as Facebook and Google, the Internet giants of the world," chief executive Takeshi Idezawa said at a Friday news conference. "Fighting in the same digital arena as them is extremely important for us."

"The operator of the world's seventh most-used messaging app listed first in New York in a move widely seen as a sign of determination to challenge global peers and eventually expand beyond strongholds of Japan and Southeast Asia."

Line opened at 4,900 yen on the Tokyo Stock Exchange, 48.5% above the initial public offering price of 3,300 yen, thanks to demand from investors hungry for a rare chance to invest in a tech startup. The stock closed at 4,345 yen.

The Tokyo offering came after Line sold about 70% more shares in New York, which closed 26.6% above the IPO.

“That was a very smooth start,” said Hiroyuki Fukunaga, chief executive of financial adviser Investrust. However, its inability to break the psychologically nicer-sounding 5,000 yen before falling back might blunt investor enthusiasm, he said.

Line launched its eponymous app to overcome downed networks in the aftermath of an earthquake and tsunami in 2011, and quickly emerged as Japan’s dominant mobile messaging platform. But the firm itself is controlled by South Korean online media provider Naver, whose stake is now 80.8%.

“Line’s floating stock is limited, so despite the firm’s large market capitalization, the shares could be very volatile,” said Investrust’s Fukunaga.

Line earns the bulk of revenue from games and the sale of emojis and electronic stickers. But like Facebook and Alphabet’s Google, advertising is a key source of income, making up more than a third of Line’s revenue.

“We have a good balance of revenue sources, and stickers and games are a great business for us,” Idezawa told Reuters in an interview on Friday, “but advertising will be a very important growth-driver.”

Japan and Thailand are especially ripe for increasing ad-based revenue because of their relatively low rate of digital advertising, Idezawa said. Line’s users are mainly in Japan, Taiwan, Thailand, and Indonesia.

“It’s getting saturated in the Japanese market. The question about growth at home is how much Line can sell ads to increase its profit margin,” said Masashi Oda, general manager of strategic investment at Sumitomo Mitsui Trust Asset Management.

“Whether Line can expand beyond its core market is key. In the U.S., there is much more competition,” he said.

Last year, revenue and other operating income at Line rose about 28.3% to 120.88 billion yen (\$1.14 billion). But it reported a net loss of 7.97 billion yen, compared with profit of 2 billion yen in 2014.

“I expect net profit to be around 27 billion yen next year,” said a Tokyo-based fund manager. “The current share price is about 36 times profit, a bit higher than rivals such as 27 to 28 times at Facebook. So for me, Line’s shares have already hit my target price.”

fortune.com

Vevo Wants to Be Your Go-To App For Music Videos

July 14, 2016

It's hoping a major redesign will help it take eyeballs from YouTube

Nearly 35 years since MTV first declared that “Video Killed the Radio Star,” you might be forgiven for believing the golden age of music videos is behind us. The network that built its kingdom on them, after all, is now better known for shows like *Catfish* and *Real World*.

But it's a pretty good time to be making music videos. Beyoncé's "visual album" *Lemonade* was a smash hit, debuting at number one on the Billboard 200. Likewise Adele's music video for *Hello*, which set a new record for the shortest time to break 1 billion online views. The video Adele unseated, Psy's *Gangnam Style*, was a viral sensation in its own right. These are not isolated events. All but two of YouTube's 40 most popular clips are music videos.

Now, a lesser-known company at the heart of the modern music video phenomenon is looking to become fans' go-to source for the clips. After long leaning on platforms like YouTube to find an audience for its videos, the New York-based Vevo announced Thursday a redesigned mobile app and site, along with a more cohesive strategic approach, that it hopes will make it a destination for music video watchers in its own right.

"If you looked at the product, if you looked at the brands, if you looked at the content, it didn't feel like it was one coherent whole, it didn't feel like the sum of the parts made up a bigger story," said Vevo CEO Erik Huggers of the company's prior efforts. Huggers joined the company last year after leading chipmaker Intel's aborted attempt to build an online television service.

"For the last nine months, we've been working really hard to put a strategy in place that brings all these pieces together and drives home the story for why we're here," he added.

Vevo's revamped app looks and functions much like other popular streaming services, albeit with a focus on music videos rather than audio. There's a recommendation engine, expertly-curated playlists, and social functions. It's a clean, inviting interface that company executives say puts the spotlight on musicians above all else, potentially important as artists clamor for more concessions from digital music firms.

Vevo currently makes money exclusively from advertising, but it is planning to roll out a subscription service. (Vevo, a privately held company, would not disclose whether it is profitable.)

Vevo was jointly founded in 2009 by Sony Music Entertainment and Universal Music Group, two of the world's biggest music labels. (It can be seen as the music industry's version of Hulu, a TV streaming service owned by several major broadcasters.) It's not quite a household name, but it claims impressive numbers nonetheless. More than 42 million people watch at least one Vevo video every month, according to comScore. Vevo says it receives 18 billion views every month, with 60% of those on mobile devices. And of the 10 most popular videos on YouTube, it lays claim to six of them.

Still, Vevo will face big challenges in its efforts to be seen as a premier destination for music video. One potential complication: Many consider the Google-owned YouTube to be synonymous with online video. But Vevo and Google are not outright competitors. In fact, Google is part owner of Vevo, while Vevo views YouTube as a distribution partner (every time you watch a Vevo video on YouTube, both sites get a share of the ad revenue). But Vevo is now pushing music fans to watch its videos on its own platform rather than on YouTube, potentially straining a complex relationship.

"I don't think there's a tension, per se," said Huggers when asked about this. "YouTube has what, a billion active users? If they're searching for music videos, we would love them to watch the Vevo music videos. That's fine and that's a good business for us. We think we can offer a better product and a better experience." Said a Google spokesperson: "Google is an investor in Vevo, and we work hand in hand with them to support artists in making connections with fans around the world."

time.com

Emerging Technology

Pokémon Go To Go Global 'Soon' As Hit Game Launches In Three More Countries

July 15, 2016

“Right now, Pokémon Go is live in the U.S., UK, Australia, New Zealand and Germany, and today it expanded to three more countries in Europe: Italy, Spain, and Portugal. Users in some other countries have found ways to download it and get access to parts of the map unofficially, but generally speaking it is closed off.”

Pokémon Go is already a phenomenon that has captured the attention of millions and added billions to Nintendo's market cap, but the game itself remains limited to a handful of countries.

There's good news for wannabe players, then, with word that it most definitely harbors global expansion plans.

Niantic, the once-Google-owned company behind the game, said today that it intends to expand the app to over 200 countries worldwide “relatively soon.”

“Why limit it?” John Hanke, Niantic's CEO, said in an interview with Reuters.

Limited is indeed the world. Right now, Pokémon Go is live in the U.S., UK, Australia, New Zealand and Germany, and today it expanded to three more countries in Europe: Italy, Spain, and Portugal. Users in some other countries have found ways to download it and get access to parts of the map unofficially, but generally speaking it is closed off. Millions of people are watching Pokémania explode without having a chance to sample it for themselves.

Yet still, Pokémon Go's numbers have blasted any previous app phenomenon out of the water.

- More daily users than Twitter
- Higher engagement than Facebook
- Estimated 7.5 million downloads in the U.S. alone
- Estimated \$1.6 million in revenue each day

The rush of interest has put a huge strain on the game's servers, though, with many users suffering in intermittent issues. That's clearly a concern for any kind of extended global expansion, but Hanke assured that the company is bulking up its infrastructure accordingly.

Two notable markets to come are Japan, the home of Pokémon and the world's most lucrative mobile games market, and Korea, another hugely valuable country where, also, Google's maps service — which Pokémon Go relies on — isn't fully supported due to local issues.

Hanke didn't give any specific details on either launch, other than that Japan will be soon (that word again!) and that the issues in Korea can be worked on.

China, the world's largest smartphone market, would seem like another obvious launch. Reuters said the Niantic CEO was “reticent” on the country, pointing out that there are additional laws and points to consider. Indeed, that's summed up neatly by reports of concern that Pokémon Go might be used for Japan, China's long-standing friend-cum-foe, or the U.S. to work out the location of military bases in the country.

techcrunch.com

Nest's Next Move Is A Step Into The Outdoor Home Security Market

July 14, 2016

The recent shake-up in the executive ranks of Nest had a lot of people wondering what the future held for Nest, specifically in regards to its product lineup. Today that question is at least partially answered. Nest just revealed a new home security camera, one targeted at outdoor monitoring, and a new software feature that utilizes tech from Google.

Called Nest Cam Outdoor, the camera is similar in many ways to the Nest Cam that the company released last summer (now called the Nest Cam Indoor). The wired outdoor cam captures 1080p HD video, has a 130-degree wide-angle viewing lens, and has a two-way mic so that users can communicate remotely with people that might be in or near their home. Their prices are the same: \$199 for an indoor Nest Cam, \$199 for an outdoor Nest Cam, which ships in the fall. And like the previous camera, the new one works with a mobile app that offers live video streaming and, as part of a subscription, advanced video features.

The main differences are in the design and waterproofing. Nest Cam Outdoor is white, designed in the style of a rounded spotlight, and was built to withstand the elements. And, since easy installation has always been one of Nest's claims, it seems relatively easy to install: you smack a magnetized disc on the back of the camera, and then hang the camera on a magnetic surface (Nest suggested gutters in my brief demo earlier this week).

The camera comes with 25 feet of cable, a 10-foot cable attached directly to the camera, and another 15 footer with an AC adapter. One upside of a wired outdoor camera is, presumably, a more reliable video feed; the downside is that you have to position it close to a power source.

The other obvious drawback of a DIY solution like Nest Cam Outdoor and some of its competitors is that they're not offering a totally comprehensive security solution for your home; they're not tied to an alarm system or professional monitoring service. But off-the-shelf cams are also a lot cheaper than professional monitoring systems, and it's an area of technology that some people say is only growing.

Nest has also made improvements to its mobile app and Nest Aware software, which costs \$10 a month for a premium subscription. The mobile app will now show wide-angle previews of the video your Nest Cam is shooting, as opposed to a small, circular thumbnail. More interestingly, Nest's director of hardware product marketing, Maxime Veron, says the company has partnered with the deep learning team at Google to develop software that will recognize when a person has entered the frame of the outdoor camera, as opposed to, say, a car or an animal, and send a mobile alert to the homeowner. Some competitors, like SimpliCam and Netatmo, already offer face detection, but this is a first for Nest.

Nest says the outdoor camera has been in the works for about a year (so, long before founder and CEO Tony Fadell's recent departure).

I also asked Veron whether Nest worked with Google, which acquired Nest Labs back in 2014, on any other aspects of the new camera; he said Nest did not. Which is both surprising and not: Nest sold to Google with the impression that it would be given a long runway to do its own thing while still utilizing Google resources, and Google's corporate restructuring last fall literally cast Nest into a separate area of the company.

The Bigger Question Is What's Next For Nest

But it's also not crazy to think that at this point, with both Nest and Google having smart home products, that Nest might have borrowed more technology from its parent company, or vice versa. Basically, this camera answers some of the short-term questions about Nest, but it's still unclear what Nest's long-term role will be within Google, or rather, Alphabet. I'm told the new Nest Cam Outdoor will work with Google Home, whenever that launches. But Nest operates entirely on its own smart home platform, separate from Google (and separately from Brillo, Google's Internet of Things platform that we haven't heard all that much about). It also doesn't work with Apple's HomeKit.

So at the moment, we know a few things: first, that Nest still makes good-looking, intuitive smart home products; that it does so almost entirely on its own, despite being a part of the behemoth that is Alphabet; and that, rather than working with other big smart home platforms, Nest is intent on getting consumers tied into its own software, and wants you to control your devices from there. What we don't know is what that really means for Nest beyond this.

[theverge.com](#)

Mergers and Acquisitions

Amazon Just Bought This Hot Cloud Startup

July 14, 2016

“It's unclear whether Amazon is acquiring the startup for its workforce or if it will incorporate some of its technology within its own cloud computing service.”

The retail giant's cloud computing service just got some new talent and tech. Amazon's cloud is getting some fancy new tools.

The retail giant's cloud-computing arm, Amazon Web Services, bought a small startup called Cloud9 that specializes in software development tools. Cloud9 revealed the deal on Thursday, but did not disclose how much the deal was worth.

Cloud9 is based in both Amsterdam and San Francisco and has under 50 employees, according to the startup's LinkedIn profile. The startup built a so-called integrated development environment, which is basically a n-all-in-one software package that gives coders a bunch of tools to build, test, debug, and run their own software.

It's unclear whether Amazon is acquiring the startup for its workforce or if it will incorporate some of its technology within its own cloud computing service.

The startup counts Salesforce, business software company Atlassian, and music service Soundcloud as customers.

“We're excited to let you, our users and customers, be among the first to learn that we have been acquired by Amazon!” wrote Cloud9 CEO Ruben Daniels in a blog post. “We will be joining the Amazon Web Services family, and we're looking forward to working together on terrific customer offerings for the future.”

In January, Cloud9 said that it would then allow its customers to use its technology to build apps on Google's competing cloud computing service. It's unclear how Cloud9's deal with Amazon will affect that capability.

Amazon declined to comment on the deal.

[fortune.com](#)

Google Acquires Content-Sharing Startup Kifi

July 13, 2016

Google is a lot of things, but in the world of social media it's still widely considered an incidental player. That might change with the announcement this week that Google's parent company Alphabet has acquired Mountain View, Calif.-based Kifi, a startup Web site link-sharing platform. Kifi could possibly help the tech giant beef up its Google Spaces social media platform. Google Spaces aims to be the app individuals use to share content in groups on any topic. Group-sharing app Kifi has Google Search, YouTube and Chrome built into it.

The details of the acquisition haven't been released, but Kifi said that part of its team will immediately start working on Google Spaces. That might dovetail with the general idea behind Kifi, which is to add context to collaboration efforts to somewhat ease the process of organizing and using information for a variety of group projects and interests. Kifi has also developed tools for contextualizing stored information, including a deep search engine for Twitter content and links. But Rand Fishkin, founder of Seattle-based SEO consulting company Moz, told us that it's important to be cautious in ascribing a motive to any of Google's small acquisitions like this one.

"It could be a pure 'acquire,' a use of Kifi's technology for a function entirely separate from its original use, or even an experiment that will never see a public launch," he said. "I wouldn't make any assumptions that Google's going deeper in the content production or distribution space based solely on this move."

Launched on May 16, Google Spaces is a way to make group sharing easier for everyone from book clubs to work groups by enabling them to avoid jumping between apps to copy and paste links. With Google Spaces, group members can see whenever someone shares something new to a space, and the app's conversational view lets users immediately see what the group is talking about without having to wade through a long thread.

Neither company has revealed how many Kifi employees will be joining Google. However, on his Google Plus page, Google engineering director Eddie Kesler said the Kifi team has a great deal of expertise that will help Google, noting "their great expertise in organizing shared content and conversations." That could be helpful to Google Spaces, whose focus now is more on group chat capabilities.

Kifi was founded in 2012 by Dan Blumenfeld and Eishay Smith. The company's early goal was to provide a consumer-centric experience of group activities and collaboration. In a post on Medium announcing the transaction, Kifi said that some of its services will soon be phased out. But even after the current iteration of Kifi is shut down, users will still have time to transfer their data to another platform of their choice, the company noted.

"We see a lot of alignment to Google's mission to organize the world's information and make it universally accessible and useful," according to Kifi. "Our team will be joining the Spaces team at Google to build solutions focused on improving group sharing, conversation, and content finding."

The transaction seems to fit in with Google's recent acquisition strategy, which has focused on small startup companies that have developed novel ideas or technologies that are easier for Google to purchase rather than develop on its own. Just in the past month, the company has bought Internet service provider Webpass, French image recognition company Moodstocks and cloud Relevant Products/Services-based video service provider Anvato.

mobile-tech-today.com

Industry Reports

T-Mobile Touts Un-carrier Success, Tears Into Verizon In FCC Competition Filing

July 13, 2016

“T-Mobile said its innovations have forced carriers into a game of ‘follow-the-leader’ that has ‘resulted in tangible consumer benefits across the wireless industry.’”

Copycat carriers might just be a good thing, at least for wireless consumers, and T-Mobile is more than happy to set the pattern.

In comments submitted to the FCC as part of its State of Mobile Wireless Competition proceeding, T-Mobile touted the success of its Un-carrier moves. T-Mobile said its innovations have forced carriers into a game of “follow-the-leader” that has “resulted in tangible consumer benefits across the wireless industry.”

By way of example, T-Mobile pointedly mocked Verizon’s recent plan changes as “striking a attempt to mimic T-Mobile’s Un-carrier initiatives,” and also noted its leadership in the elimination of long-term contracts and payment of early termination fees up to \$650.

Last week, Verizon rolled out a revamped plan structure that includes larger data buckets, carry over data and overage Safety Mode features that closely resemble T-Mobile’s own Simple Choice, Data Stash and unlimited data offerings.

Ultimately, though, T-Mobile said the imitation of its disruptive moves is good for wireless subscribers across the board.

“The large incumbent carriers have taken notice and responded by replicating some of the most popular features of our innovative programs, albeit often without offering the same high level of consumer benefit,” T-Mobile’s Senior Vice President of Government Affairs Kathleen O’Brien Ham wrote. “Nonetheless, the net result is that T-Mobile’s Un-carrier initiatives have benefited not only T-Mobile customers, but all wireless consumers.”

In what appeared to be a veiled reference to the ongoing broadband privacy proceedings, T-Mobile parlayed this argument into a plea for the FCC to carefully consider “actions that might inhibit or limit the ability of competitors like T-Mobile to offer innovative products and services to consumers.”

“The development of original and creative consumer offerings that result in tangible benefits for consumers should be encouraged, not stymied by theoretical concerns,” Ham wrote. “As history has shown us, adopting pro-competitive policies that encourage innovation will benefit not only T-Mobile customers, but all consumers throughout the mobile wireless market.”

wirelessweek.com

Google's Project Fi Boosts Data Speeds When Traveling Abroad

July 12, 2016

One hassle of traveling out of the country is making sure your phone is ready for the trip too.

Google's experimental wireless service, called Project Fi, already works for US users traveling abroad, without requiring them to pay more for international plans. But on Tuesday, the search giant said it wants to sweeten the pot for people using Fi while traveling by revving up international data speeds. (Google still doesn't offer Fi to users based outside the US.)

It's the latest perk rolled out by Project Fi, which has been able to undercut traditional carriers by letting people switch between cellular service and Wi-Fi signals automatically and without dropping a call or disrupting a streaming video. Google uses Project Fi, which runs on the Sprint, T-Mobile and US Cellular networks, to test models and services that it hopes the greater wireless industry will adopt.

The service is part of a broader initiative by Google to provide more wireless access to more people. Project Fi joins Google Fiber, its program to sell super-fast internet service, and Project Loon, which uses balloons to rain down Wi-Fi signals in rural areas. Google is one of several companies, including Facebook, angling to connect more people to the internet and, potentially, to their services.

Project Fi costs \$20 a month for voice, text, Wi-Fi tethering and international coverage. Each gigabyte of data costs \$10 per month. But if you don't use all of the data you buy for the month, Google refunds you for what you didn't use.

Google said only 20 percent of Americans use cellular connections when they travel abroad because the service is so slow, according to a survey the company conducted in June. With Fi's update, international data speeds will be 10 to 20 times faster, the company said. To strengthen its coverage, Google added has added the international carrier Three to its Fi network.

The company also said it's expanding international coverage to more than a dozen new countries and territories, including the Bahamas, Montenegro and Macao.

There's a big catch for Google Fi, though. Right now, it works only with a small number of phones designed by Google, including the Nexus 5X and 6P. Sorry, iPhone users, you're out of luck. To try to entice more customers, Google said it will be shaving \$150 off the Nexus 6P for the next week when they buy and activate Fi.

Project Fi is an important experiment for Google, but it is just that. Before Fi launched, the company said it doesn't intend to become a full-blown wireless carrier.

cnet.com



120 Madison Street, 15th Floor
Syracuse, New York 13202
www.ksrinc.com
(315) 470-1350
1-888-8KS RINC

