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Allo, Google's new mobile messaging app, is full of intelligence. It also looks good. It's written Hangout's killer everywhere. But Hangouts is here to stay, according to Google. In a statement to Business Insider, a company spokesman said Google will continue to invest in Hangouts and remain a standalone product. Why doesn't Google replace dreary old Hangouts with the seemingly superior Allo? An obvious reason is the fact that Allo is a pure mobile app, at least for now. It doesn't even require a Google account because it works with your phone number. Hangouts, on the other hand, works on the desktop and is integrated with Gmail and Docs. It is also an important part of Google's suite of enterprise tools, as well as Project Fi. We can speculate that Google will eventually expand Allo with more functionality and multi-platform support. And it's possible that Allo will eventually tie up with Google accounts. At least until then, Hangouts is safe. It is also possible that Allo (and his duo Sidekick) will coexist with Hangouts indefinitely, just as Facebook's Messenger is doing very well in WhatsApp's company. And there was nothing to suggest that Assistant, Allo's most compelling feature, will ever land on Hangouts. Google has a long-standing fragmentation problem when it comes to its messaging services, dating back to Gtalk. Now that we have Allo and Hangouts (and Duo and Messenger for SMS, Spaces and YouTube messaging), it seems that Google has almost given up on uniting everything. How do you feel about Hangouts? Now that millions of people around the world are practicing social deprivation thanks to the current coronavirus pandemic, it is more important than ever to stay in touch. This includes facilitating video meetings with your colleagues while you're working remotely, or just checking in with your friends and family. If you're looking for a robust tool for one of these use cases, consider Google Hangouts. Related: Top 10 Tips for Remote Work: Stay Productive While Working From Home Google Hangouts is a free chat, audio call and video call service. It is relatively easy to use. All you need to get started is a Google account. But before we talk about how to use Google Hangouts, let's talk about what it is exactly. What is Google Hangouts? Hangouts originally began as a feature in Google+ long before the timely demise of the social network. Google finally launched a standalone Hangouts app in May 2013. Since then, the app has gained (and lost) a few features. Unfortunately, the brand name Hangouts has turned into a slightly set of communication tools. These include Chat, Meet and Dialer. Classic Google Hangouts allows users to send messages one-to-one or in groups of up to 150 people. You can also video chat with other people or in groups of up to 10 people. On the other hand, Google users can chat video in groups of up to 25 people. Related: 10 best alternatives to FaceTime on Android! The other apps in the Hangouts ecosystem are for Google Voice subscribers and G Suite users. If you have a voice account, Hangouts users can call anyone around the world for free through the Dialer app. If you have a G Suite account, you can also use Hangouts Chat and Meet. Chat offers a similar experience to Slack with built-in Google search functionality and Google Docs, slide, and table integration. Meet touts similar video chat functionality to classic hangouts, but with a more robust feature set. This includes support for video and audio meetings with up to 250 users and Google Calendar integration for meeting details and scheduling. After all, Google will most likely pull back classic Hangouts and move free users to Meet and Chat without needing G Suite accounts. Until then, the Standard Hangouts app is available to everyone. It is also accessible online and has a Google Chrome extension. How to use the Google Hangouts app Maybe is the best and easiest way to use Hangouts with the app. It's available on Android and iOS, and you don't need to worry about peripherals because your phone includes a built-in camera and microphone. To get started, you need to download the Google Hangouts app. From there, you'll need to sign in to the Google account of your choice. You don't need to set up a Hangouts profile because it uses the information you've already set from your Gmail account. Read also: 10 best VoIP and SIP apps for Android! Now that you've signed in with the account of your choice, you can start messaging and video chats. Start a new conversation or video call Tap the green-and-white + button at the bottom right of the app and select either New Conversation or New Video Call. You can then enter the name, email address, or phone number of an existing Hangouts user to start a text-based conversation or a video call. If you start a new conversation with someone who isn't already using Hangouts by entering their email address or phone number, they'll be sent an invitation to use the service. To notify multiple people at the same time, you can create groups by selecting a new group under the Contact Entry field and adding up to 150 people. To have video chat with multiple people simply add up to nine contacts in the input box when you start a video call. If you have a business account, you can create video chats with up to 24 others. You can add more people to groups at any time by selecting the three vertices at the top right of the user interface from the group and tapping People. You can also invite more people to a running video chat by tapping the three vertices. Tap. at the top right of the video call and when selecting Invite. There is an option to share a link to a running video call. If you share this link with someone and click on it, they can join the video call by simply logging in with their Gmail account. Once you've started a single or group conversation, you can pick up where you left off by selecting the conversation on the app's main page. How to use Hangouts in your web browser If you prefer to use Hangouts in your web browser, it is quite simple. First, you need to set up a microphone and webcam if you want to sunbathe in video chat. Most laptops will have both built in. If your laptop doesn't use a desktop or you're using a desktop, you'll need to set up some external peripherals. Related: The 6 best webcams you can buy Once you do that, navigate to hangouts.google.com in your computer browser. You'll need to sign in with your desired Google Account if you're not already. Once you're there, starting text and video conversations is pretty easy. Start a new conversation or video call Tap the message or video call icon in the middle of the screen. You can then enter the name, email address, or phone number of an existing Hangouts user to start a text-based conversation or a video call. If you enter the email address or phone number of someone who is not already using Hangouts, they will send them an invitation to use the service. To notify multiple people at the same time, you can create groups by selecting a new group under the Contact Entry field and adding up to 150 people. To video chat with multiple people at the same time, simply add up to nine contacts in the input field when you start a video call. If you have a business account, you can create video chats with up to 24 others. You can add more people to groups at any time by selecting the People icon at the top left of the conversation window. You can also invite more people to a running video chat by tapping a person's icon with a + at the top right of the user interface. There is an option to share a link to a running video call. If you share this link with someone and click on it, they can join the video call by simply logging in with their Gmail account. Also note that your data is continuously synchronized between the app and the website. This means that you can set up a group video call in your browser and access it at any time from your mobile phone. Google Use in your browser So is to use the Chrome extension Last there is the Chrome extension. Just like the website, you need a microphone and a webcam if you want to make video calls. You must also use Google Chrome or another Chromium-based browser such as the new Microsoft Edge. Then navigate to the Google Hangouts extension page in the supported browser of your choice. Once you have added the extension to your browser, you will have a new Google Hangouts icon in your browser Click this icon to open the Hangouts extension pop-up window. Read also: Google finally announces Chrome App Death Timeline If you're already signed in to your Google Account in your browser, the extension will automatically sign in to your Hangouts account. If you're not signed in, Hangouts will prompt you to do so. Once you've signed in, starting a new conversation or video call is very similar to the previous methods, with some minor differences. Start a new conversation or video call Tap New Conversation at the top left of the window. You can then enter the name, email address, or phone number of an existing Hangouts user to start a text-based conversation. If you enter the email address or phone number of someone who is not already using Hangouts, they will send them an invitation to use the service. To notify multiple people at the same time, you can create groups by selecting a new group under the Contact Entry field and adding up to 150 people. To create video chats, you must first start a conversation, and then click the video camera icon at the top right of the conversation window. You can also invite more people to a running video chat by tapping a person's icon with a + at the top right of the user interface. You can invite up to nine more people in a video call under a standard Google account and 24 more people under a business account. There is also an option to share a link to a running video call. If you share this link with someone and click on it, they can join the video call by simply logging in with their Gmail account. Like the website and app, your conversations are continuously synced across your account. Get the Google Hangouts Chrome Extension There you go! Now you know how to use Google Hangouts. Set up video meetings, check in family members or make friends no matter where they are in the world! World!