

# The New York Times

## Google to Offer Fast Broadband as Trial to Spur Providers

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SAN FRANCISCO — Google on Wednesday introduced a plan to offer ultra-high-speed Internet access to consumers in a test intended to showcase the potential new uses of broadband networks once such speeds become commonplace.



Justin Sullivan/Getty Images

Google's headquarters in Mountain View, Calif

The test could also help advance Google's policy goals of open, unfettered Internet access, challenging the business model of established telecommunications companies.

In a post on its [corporate blog](#), the company said it planned to build and test a high-speed fiber optic broadband network capable of allowing people to surf the Web at a gigabit a second, or about 100 times the speed of many broadband connections. The trial could be offered in several communities and extend to as many as 500,000 people.

In an interview, Richard S. Whitt, Google's Washington telecommunications and media counsel, said Google did not see the test as a new business venture as an Internet service provider, but rather as an effort to push the industry into offering faster Internet access at lower cost.

"We are not getting into the I.S.P. or broadband business," said Mr. Whitt, using the industry shorthand for Internet service provider. "This is a business model nudge and an innovation nudge."

Mr. Whitt said that if the project was successful, Google would benefit because more people would use the Internet, and in turn, the company's own services.

"All companies who live on the Web ultimately benefit if consumers have more access to the Net than they have today," Mr. Whitt said.

Google said that over the next six weeks, it would solicit proposals from communities interested in the service, and then announce trial communities later this year. Mr. Whitt said he hoped that the service could be deployed by the end of the year in some areas, though he acknowledged it might take longer.

Mr. Whitt said that Google had urged to [Federal Communications Commission](#) earlier this year to encourage similar kinds of test projects. “After we did that, we talked about it and said we could leave this to the government or do it on our own,” Mr. Whitt said. Google decided to put its own money behind the idea, though he declined to say how much Google would invest in the project.

In a statement, [Julius Genachowski](#), the chairman of the F.C.C., welcomed Google’s announcement. “This significant trial will provide an American test bed for the next generation of innovative, high-speed Internet apps, devices and services,” Mr. Genachowski said. “The F.C.C.’s National Broadband Plan will build upon such private-sector initiatives and will include recommendations for facilitating and accelerating greater investment in broadband, creating jobs and increasing America’s global competitiveness.”

Mr. Whitt said that while Google would build the network, it might not offer the Internet service to consumers. Instead, he said the company planned to open its network to other service providers, emulating a business model that was common during the days of dial-up Internet access. That model all but disappeared in the United States with advent of broadband, but remains common in other countries.

“It may be that Google is the I.S.P., but it could be [AOL](#) or [EarthLink](#) or dozens of companies you could choose from,” Mr. Whitt said. “We are more interested in learning what happens to the network itself.”

Google has a long history of pushing against what it sees as barriers to fast and unfettered Internet access. Since 2006, the company has operated its own wireless network in Mountain View, Calif., where it is based. It later supported a plan to offer similar service in San Francisco, which was derailed because of opposition from some city officials.

In 2008, Google bid more than \$4 billion in a government auction for wireless spectrum. Google said it had no desire to win the auction, but wanted to ensure that the airwaves would be subject to so-called openness requirements — meaning that Google services like Web search, Gmail and maps could not be excluded from phones using those frequencies.

*Brad Stone contributed reporting.*

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