

Open Garden launches invite to chat off the grid

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(Phys.org) —What, use chat on a tablet or smartphone but without any Internet connection? No chat signing-in? No password? Yes to all, with Thursday's announcement from Open Garden to introduce its FireChat for iOS. The free app is available, in the App Store, for iPhones, iPads, and iPods running [iOS 7](#). It's available in English, and other languages including Chinese and Japanese. The San Francisco based startup initially set out to break down the walls of connectivity, "dedicated to bringing Internet to every device, every person, and every location by sharing and crowdsourcing connectivity." Open Garden seamlessly interconnects nearby smartphones, computers, and tablets to form a mesh network. Their app was designed especially for Wi-Fi networks in public places that are protected yet intended to be open, such as those at conferences, parks and coffeeshops. "Today, we are excited to announce the launch of our very first iOS app, FireChat!" the company said on Thursday.

The team described FireChat as a free chatting app that adapts "whether you're connected to the Internet or off-the-grid – meaning even when there is no Internet connection or even cellular phone coverage." That also means there is no significant impact from FireChat use on battery consumption.

"We may think that we depend on the Internet for everything. FireChat proves that it's not always the case," said Micha Benoliel, Open Garden's CEO. "People ask me: how does this work without an Internet connection? Thanks to the Multipeer Connectivity Framework introduced in iOS 7, we are now able to deliver a best-in-class peer-to-peer chat experience to anyone with an iPhone, iPad or iPod touch." FireChat was designed to be well suited for any situation where connectivity is unreliable, such as in public transportation, stadiums, clubs, concerts, construction sites or outdoor festivals.

Open Garden is hardly the first to offer a social communications [app](#)

but, as *GigaOm* pointed out, Open Garden is one of the first companies to leverage the Multipeer Connectivity Framework that Apple [introduced](#) in iOS 7, for peer to peer connectivity. *GigaOm*'s Kevin Fitchard also noted the fundamental messaging nature of FireChat as a social communication medium that creates "a constantly morphing" community composed of other FireChat users in the vicinity whether it's in a subway car, at a sporting event, or in a coffee shop, according to Micha Benoliel, Open Garden co-founder and CEO. In turn, FireChat would also be a useful medium in situations where disaster recovery and public safety are urgent concerns shared by the people involved.

More information: [FireChat](#)

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