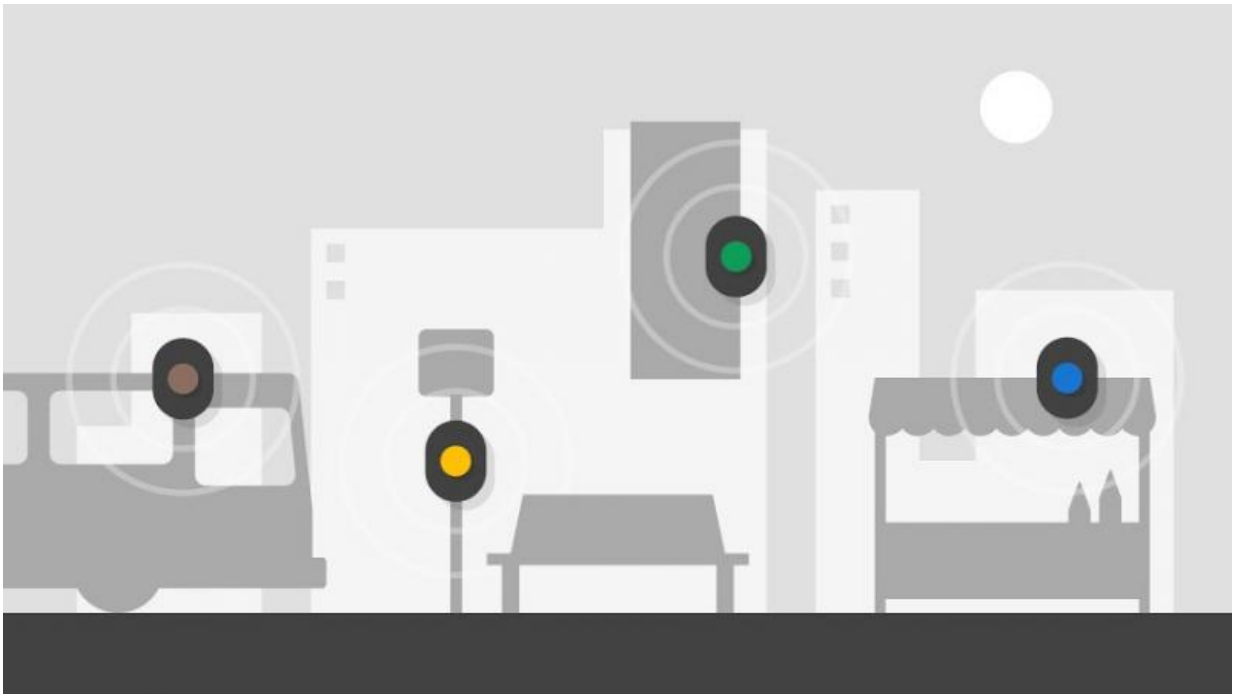


# Eddystone: Cross-platform beacon format gets Google launch

July 15 2015, by Nancy Owano

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Google is introducing the Eddystone beacon format. On Tuesday Google launched a beacon technology called Eddystone along with APIs. Together, they will make it easier for devices in close proximity to communicate. Numerous sites including *9to5Google* sat up and took notice of information in the posting headlined "Lighting the way with BLE beacons" on the official Google Developers Blog where Chandu

Thota, engineering director, and Matthew Kulick, product manager, wrote about Google's latest developments with Eddystone.

Just as the lighthouse helped sailors navigate for thousands of years, they said, (there is an Eddystone Lighthouse in England), modern electronic [beacons](#) can help us navigate the world with precise location and contextual cues within apps.

Fundamentally, the beacons are transmitters, said Ron Amadeo in *Ars Technica*, "that send out [information](#) about a specific point of interest, and that info is then passively picked up by a smartphone or tablet in range of the transmitter."

A beacon can label a bus stop so your phone knows to have your ticket ready; a museum app can provide background on the work of art that you're viewing.

Eddystone is the open beacon format from Google. The Eddystone specification includes a number of broadcast frame types, including Eddystone-URL, the backbone of the Physical Web. (The Google blog said, "We want to make beacons useful even when a mobile app is not available; to that end, the Physical Web [project](#) will be using Eddystone beacons that broadcast URLs to help people interact with their surroundings." )

Google said that it was beginning to roll out a new set of features to help developers build apps using this technology. "This includes a new open format for Bluetooth low energy (BLE) beacons to communicate with people's devices, a way for you to add this meaningful data to your apps and to Google services, as well as a way to manage your fleet of beacons efficiently."

Eddystone is now an open source project on GitHub under the Apache

v2.0 license, "for everyone to use and help improve," they said.

What this means, said *9to5Google*, is that manufacturers of physical beacon hardware can access and use it in their beacons and even existing beacons can be made Eddystone-compliant through a firmware update. Another beneficial result is that Eddystone is an attractive out-of-the-box option for manufacturers who may not want to write their own [software](#).

it's extensible (new functionality easy to add); scalable; and capable of communicating with any device, iOS and Android included, that supports Bluetooth Low Energy, said *9to5Google*.

Tech bloggers were largely encouraged by the fact that this is a cross-platform standard. "Move over iBeacon," said Ron Amadeo in *Ars Technica*.

Natalie Gagliardi in *ZDNet* noted Tuesday that Eddystone is capable of supporting Android, iOS or any platform that supports BLE beacons.

The Google posting said, "Beacons are an important way to deliver better experiences for users of your apps, whether you choose to use Eddystone with your own products and services or as part of a broader Google solution."

All in all, said Amadeo, "Eddystone sounds like a very promising project. We'll finally have a well-supported, cross platform beacon technology. Now we just need businesses, transit authorities, and other companies to invest in the hardware."

Also looking at the bigger picture, said Gagliardi, "Eddystone is yet another drop in Google's rapidly filling bucket of IoT [endeavors](#). Plus, it's still in the very early stages of infancy, so it will be interesting to see

how it catches on with OEMs."

"If you're going to make a beacon standard, you're going to actually need manufacturers on board, and Google already has a several companies signed up to use Eddystone," said Amadeo in *Ars Technica*.

A Google Developers site page on beacons said, "We've developed and tested Eddystone with hardware manufacturers to be robust and available at launch." They said, "You can get beacons capable of being provisioned with Eddystone from these manufacturers," and they listed the names.

**More information:** [googledevelopers.blogspot.com/...ith-ble-beacons.html](http://googledevelopers.blogspot.com/...ith-ble-beacons.html)  
[developers.google.com/beacons/](http://developers.google.com/beacons/)

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