



Google for India 2019: Powering India’s digital economy and building a helpful Google for every Indian

Announces Google Research India—an AI lab in Bangalore, focussed on advancing India’s knowledge in AI and other advanced computing fields

Partners with BSNL to bring fast, reliable and secure public WiFi to villages in Gujarat, Maharashtra and Bihar

Launches Vodafone-Idea Phone Line powered by Google Assistant -- to make information accessible to 2G users

Expands Indian language support across Google Assistant, Discover, Lens and Bolo

Launches Tokenized cards for debit card and credit card users across India, and a brand new ‘Google Pay for Business’ app for merchants

Introduces Spot Platform on Google Pay for merchants to create branded commercial experiences that bridge the offline and online worlds

Announces a new Jobs effort focusing on entry-level jobs, and a partnership with National Skills Development Corporation for their Skill India program

New Delhi, India, August 28, 2019: Today, at the fifth edition of its annual ‘Google for India’ event, Google announced its plans to make the internet more accessible, inclusive and empowering for everyone in India.

Talking about India’s digital transformation, and the unprecedented opportunities it has created, **Caesar Sengupta, Vice-President, Next Billion Users Initiative and Payments** shared, “With Google’s ongoing commitment to improve access beyond train stations to villages across India, we have partnered with BSNL to bring fast, reliable and secure public WiFi to villages in Gujarat, Bihar and Maharashtra. Talking about India’s potential to contribute to advancements in AI and its application to tackle big challenges. He announced, Google Research India. An AI lab in Bangalore that will focus on advancing fundamental computer science and AI research and applying this research to tackle big problems in fields like healthcare, agriculture, and education while also using it to make apps and services used by billions of people, more helpful.”



In addition, Google also announced an initiative to help the hundreds of millions of Indians who use 2G phones get the information they need, without requiring data or an internet connection.

While improving access to the internet is just the first step, making it relevant and helpful, with information they need, and in the languages they speak, is equally critical. Recognizing Assistant's popularity in India, **Manuel Bronstein, Vice President, Product Management, Google** said "For many Indians, voice is increasingly becoming their preferred way to search, and *today Hindi has become the second-most used Assistant language globally--after English.*" He announced an all new experience in nine Indian languages [Hindi, Marathi, Bengali, Tamil, Telugu, Gujarati, Kannada, Malayalam, and Urdu], that will help users talk to their Assistant more naturally, without the need to go digging around in settings. For example, Hindi speaking users can now simply say, "Hey Google, talk to me in Hindi". The feature will be accessible on all Android, Android Go and KaiOs devices. He also announced that interpreter mode will be coming soon to the Assistant on Android and Android Go phones in the coming months, which will help translate from one language to another, helping unlock more relevant information and content for even more users across India.

*Manuel also launched, **The Vodafone-Idea Phone Line—supported by the Google Assistant** that enables Vodafone-Idea users to call a single number free of charge (000 800 9191000), at any time, and ask for everything from sports scores, traffic conditions and weather forecasts or simply get help with homework.*

Avneesh Khosla, Operations Director, Marketing, Vodafone Idea Limited said, "There are millions of Indians who are still using feature phones, and are unable to enjoy the benefits of mobile internet. Through this partnership with Google, we are bringing a first-of-its kind offering for our feature phone users -- the Phone Line service enables our customers to call a number free of charge, and access the Google Assistant to experience the power of the Internet even without a data connection."

Alongside making the Assistant more helpful for Indians, **Yossi Matias, Vice President, Engineering, Google** announced "We are adding more Indian languages to [Discover](#)—a Google feed that gives Indians updates on the stories they care about. These include Tamil, Telugu, Bengali, Gujarati, Marathi, Kannada, and Malayalam with Oriya, Urdu and Punjabi to follow soon."

Continuing its effort to bridge the learning & reading gap in India, Google expanded [Bolo](#), a speech-based app that helps children learn to read, to five new Indian languages -- Bangla, Marathi, Tamil, Telugu and Urdu, and expanding our content pool by partnering with publishers like [Chotta Bheem](#) and [Katha Kids](#). **Sapna Chadha, Director of Marketing, Southeast Asia & India, Google** said, "Bolo has already helped 800,000 young Indians read stories more than three million times, and speak half a billion words. In partnership with NGOs like [Saaijha](#), the [Kaivalya Education Foundation](#), [Pratham Education Foundation](#), [Room to Read](#), and working together with state governments and schools, our aim is to make Bolo reach even more children across the country."



Sapna also said, “Google [Lens](#)--which allows people to search for information, ask questions and translate text by pointing their phone’s camera at things they’re interested in, will now be available in Tamil, Telugu and Marathi.”

Highlighting Google Pay’s contribution in supporting India’s digital payments ecosystem, and building platforms for economic opportunity **Ambarish Kenghe, Director, Product Management, Google Pay said**, “The biggest story in India’s booming internet economy has been the rise of digital payments. With BHIM UPI crossing 900 million payments last month, India is setting the global standard on how to digitise payments. In the last 12 months alone, Google Pay has grown 3X to reach to 67 million monthly active users, driving transactions worth over \$110Bn on an annualized basis, with hundreds of thousands of offline and online merchants.”

To further support the growth of digital payments, Kenghe announced the launch of the **Spot platform** on Google Pay that enables merchants to create branded commercial experiences that help bridge the offline and online worlds. As part of the early access program, Google Pay users will already be able to use Spot of popular services like UrbanClap, Goibibo, MakeMyTrip, RedBus, Eat.Fit and Oven Story.

In addition, Google Pay also announced the launch of tokenized cards for **debit and credit card holders**--a secure way of paying for things using a digital token on your phone rather than your actual card number. Tokenized cards on Google Pay will be rolling out in the next few weeks with Visa cards for HDFC, Axis, Kotak and Standard Chartered banks, and support to cover Mastercard and Rupay and more banks in the coming months.

Talking about Google Pay’s plans to rapidly expand the adoption of digital payments by merchants, Kenghe, said, “The vast majority of India’s over 60 million small businesses are still not benefiting from the growing digital economy. We’re launching a new app called **Google Pay for Business**: a free and easy way for small and medium-sized merchants to enable digital payments without the hassle of time-consuming onboarding and verification process. We hope these initiatives will help merchants adopt digital payments with more confidence, and help contribute to the long term growth of online financial services for the benefit of every Indian.”

Enabling economic opportunities for every Indian also means helping people prepare for jobs and connecting them with the right opportunities. **Caesar Sengupta, Vice-President, Next Billion Users Initiative and Payments** announced a new Jobs effort focusing on entry-level jobs that are not easily discoverable online. He said, “Jobs will be available as a Spot on Google Pay to help job seekers find and prepare for entry-level positions that fit their needs. It uses machine learning to recommend jobs and training content to help these users prepare for interviews and learn new skills. Jobs also makes it easy for them to apply, schedule interviews and engage directly with potential employers.” Caesar further announced a partnership with the National Skills Development Corporation for their Skill India program. As part of this collaboration, Skill India students will be offered a seamless way to get started with Jobs and find employment opportunities.



Job Spot is being introduced with 24 early partners like 24Seven and Healthkart in retail, Swiggy, Zomato and Dunzo in delivery and logistics, and Fabhotels in hospitality, with more sectors and partners to be announced in the coming weeks.

Speaking at the event, Hon'ble Minister for Communication, Technology, Law and Justice

Speaking at the event, **Ravi Shankar Prasad, Honorable Minister of Communications and Electronics and Information Technology, Law and Justice, Government of India**, said *"Digital India was designed to ensure digital inclusion. Today I wish to compliment Google for launching so many new products contributing to this goal with due regard to safety and security. I don't have a slightest doubt that Google has a crucial role in helping India achieve its goal of a trillion dollar digital economy."*

More exciting updates from Google for India 2019 [here](#).

Google for India 2019 Press Site [here](#)

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