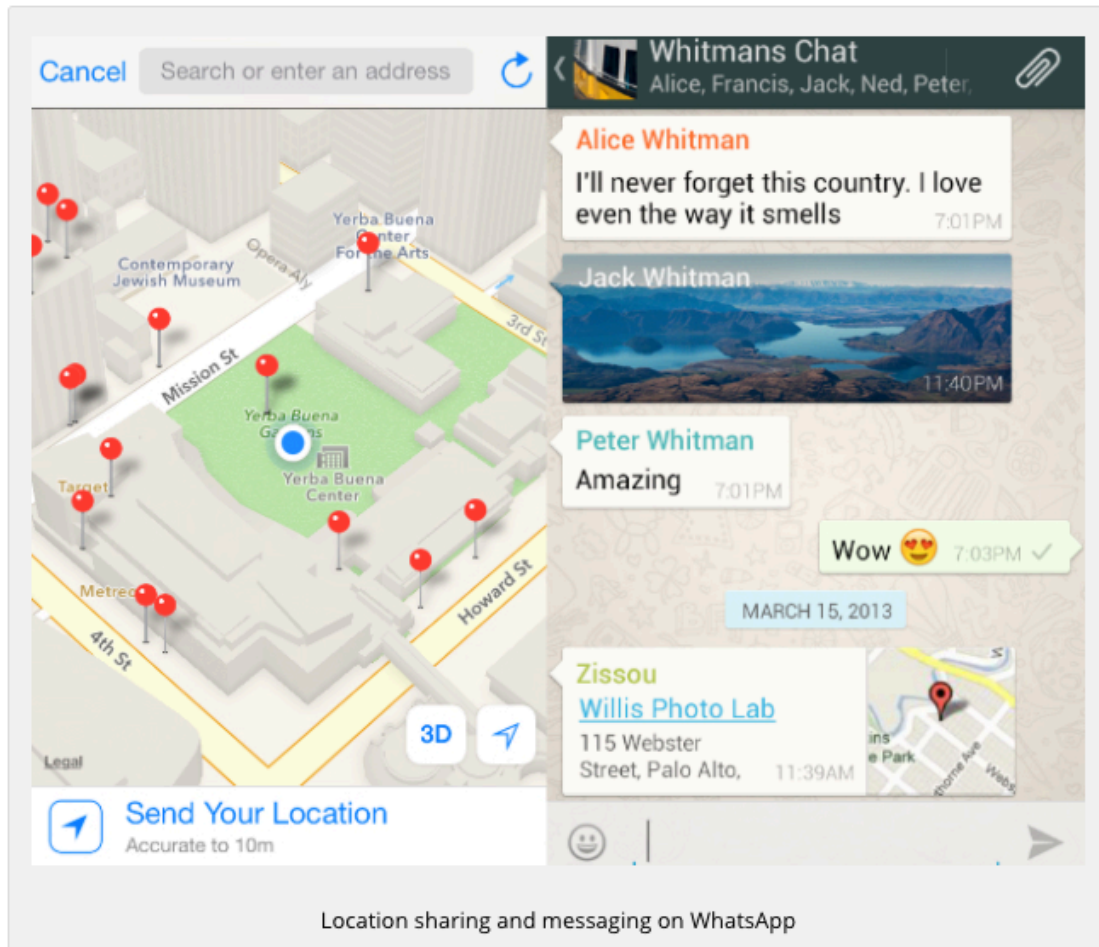




WhatsApp is a free to download messenger app for smartphones. WhatsApp uses the internet to send messages, images, audio or video. The service is very similar to text messaging services however, because WhatsApp uses the internet to send messages, the cost of using WhatsApp is significantly less than texting. It is popular with teenagers because of features like group chatting, voice messages and location sharing.

Growth of WhatsApp

With 700 Million users, as of January 2015, WhatsApp is currently the biggest online messenger app on the market. Founded in 2009 by ex-Yahoo employees it started as a small startup and swelled to 250,000 users in just a few months, growing so fast that they had to add a charge for using the service per year to slow the subscription rate down. In 2014 WhatsApp was acquired by Facebook.



Location sharing and messaging on WhatsApp

Using WhatsApp

To use WhatsApp you need: a compatible smartphone or tablet with a simcard, an internet connection and a phone number. The app uses your phone number as its username, and your account is locked to the phone, although you can transfer your contacts over to new devices. To use the app it costs £0.99 per year, with the first year being free. This cost is used as an InApp purchase. In January 2015 WhatsApp introduced a Google Chrome plugin to allow users to access their WhatsApp chats on their desktops.

Features of WhatsApp

Users of WhatsApp can share their location in real time over messages. They can also organise lists of contacts so that they can quickly send messages to lots of people in group chats through WhatsApp. Probably the best feature of WhatsApp is that it allows users to keep in touch with people living abroad, without incurring the international charges associated with text messages.

Terms and conditions and privacy on WhatsApp

WhatsApp terms and conditions specify that users should be at least 16 years of age to use the service. By default, WhatsApp will automatically set your Privacy Settings to allow any WhatsApp user to view your last seen, profile photo and status. Consider, **switching this setting to limit who can see your profile.**

To switch your profile setting, simply go to: Menu Button > Settings > Account > Privacy. You can set the following options for your account privacy from Everyone (Public) to **My Contacts** or Nobody (Private).