Google may shut down Hangouts for consumers in 2020

The days of Google Hangouts for consumers may be coming to an end in 2020, according to a report from *9to5Google* today. Hangouts has been suffering from an identity crisis since Google launched it as a replacement for Gchat in 2013, and it's actually been losing features in recent years as the company stopped updating the app and took away SMS messaging. That change was part of Google's new focus for Hangouts, which will stay safe for now as a workplace communication tool in the form of G Suite's Hangouts Chat, as well as video conferencing platform Hangouts Meet.

Google hinted at "giving up on having its own consumer messaging app" back in April, when it announced a new RCS Chat feature within Android Messages. Chat hasn't officially launched yet, as the timing is up to each carrier, but reports of support for RCS messaging coming in early 2019 fit the timing for Hangouts shutting down in 2020.

Still, it doesn't bode well for people who primarily use Hangouts within Gmail, or use it to communicate with their kids or people who don't have cell phones. There are still a lot of details up in the air right now, so we've reached out to Google for comment and will update if we hear back.

https://www.theverge.com/2018/11/30/18120199/google-hangouts-consumers-2020-chat-app-shut-down