

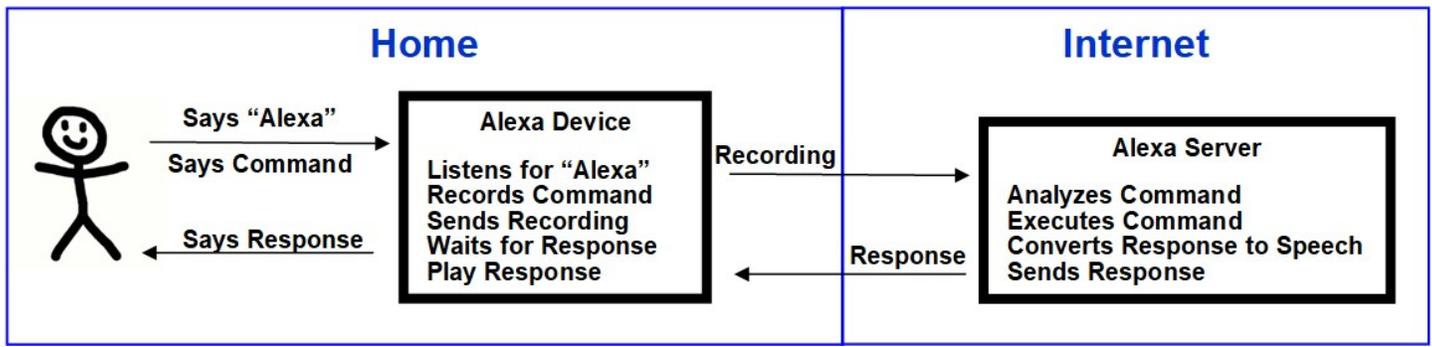
# Voice & Video Assistants

We have been waiting for home automation ever since the "Jetsons" house in 1962. Over 20% of U.S. adults have a smart speaker in their home and it is rising every month with 39 million sold this year. Voice is a very convenient way to communicate with technology. An assistant is an electronic device that connects to other devices and networks. In the last two years voice assistants have been joined by the video assistants. Voice assistants start at \$20.

## History & How They Work

Voice assistants started in Smartphones back in 2011 with Apple Siri and Google Now. Over the years the systems have improved to listen better, respond better, and interact with other smart devices. In 2016 Amazon created the first voice assistants Echo and Dot. Amazon and Google are the two main companies that make assistants. New devices are coming out all the time with assistants being added into TVs, cars, home appliances, and many other devices. Several months ago Google introduced 16 new Amazon assistants including a ring, glasses, and earbuds.

**Security/Privacy Concern:** Assistants are always listening and waiting for their wake word. Once you wake it, it begins recording audio and sends the recording to a server to process. The real brains are not in the little speakers in our homes, they're on a massive server on the Internet. People confuse 'always listening' with 'always recording'. It is not recording and sending what you say all the time. The recordings that are sent are used to improve your service and can be deleted at any time and are not used to spy on people.



The genius in these assistants is they can remove background noise and single out their wake word. Tucked under the light ring on a Dot is an array of seven microphones that use beam-forming technology and enhanced noise cancellation. It can hear you ask a question from any direction, even while playing music or other people talking. They require an Internet connection which can be easily done with the free WiFi at Carondelet. Setup is done using an app on a smartphone, tablet, or to the web site. Assistants can interact with many other Smart Devices like lights. Not all Smart Devices work with all assistants, so check before you buy.

I have three Amazon dots that I paid \$25 ea in my house. I have also put one in my parent's apartment in Carondelet. I use them to turn on lights, space heater, radio, podcasts, news, weather, sports scores, calendar for day, grocery list, my parents to remind pills three times a day, music, questions, time/date, and more every day.

## Voice Commands

The default wake word is "Alexa", it can be changed to "Amazon", "Echo", or "Computer". The commands I will be showing today are using free services. If you have Amazon Prime, Amazon Music, Amazon Photo, Hulu TV, Audio Books, and other services you can access additional content. Below is small sample of the millions of commands they can respond to.

Time, Date, Weather, News, Will it snow on Sunday What's my Flash Briefing "News and Weather"	Tell me about the movie [title] What's on ABC tonight at 7 PM
Play the station KS95/WCCO/MyTalk 107.1 Play music Read [Hunger Games], What is free from Audible	Play the Frank Sinatra station Play meditation music
Stop/Off/Exit/Shut up Volume Up/Down/to 5/mute/unmute	Open any Podcast, Play Garage Logic, Previous Rewind 30 seconds
Set Alarm for 5 minutes/5 PM/every day at 5 PM Wake me up at 8 AM to [music or radio station]	Set a 15 minute timer for Pizza How long is left on the timer, Stop the timer
Remind me on Sunday to call Fred Jones	Add an event to my calendar, My Calendar

Remind me three times a week to water the plants	Check my email
Add eggs to my shopping list, What's on my shopping list? Clear my shopping list, Create a new list	Add to my to-do [task], List my to-do, Delete my to-do
Who is leading in Golf, Enable Jeopardy, Help me relax	Tell me a joke, How do you spell [word]
Remind me to pick up Jimmy when I leave work every Wednesday	Start seven-minute workout, Open Happy Days, Reorder coffee, Buy more deodorant, Where is my order
What is 12 * 23, How many ounces in a cup	Wikipedia 'Antarctica', Where's the nearest bank?
How do you say [thank you grandma] in Italian	What movies are playing near me How is traffic to the airport
Call Fred Jones, Call 1-651-123-4567, Answer, Hang up Send a message, Play messages, Play notifications	Send a text "uses your phone" Drop in on the living room "Permissions need to be set"
What time is it in New York, What is the 3M stock price	Tell me a joke, Make me a sandwich, Roll dice, Flip a coin
Up up down down left right left right	What can I say, Let's chat
Turn on/off the lamp, Dim the lights Turn on the Fan/Heater Set the temperature to 72 degrees	Unlock the front door Close my garage Control Amazon Fire TV streamer
Millions of other commands	

**Video Assistant**

A Video Assistants is a combination of a voice assistant with the addition of touch screen display and camera. It is not a tablet and you can not load apps on them, but they are cheaper than a tablet. Prices range from \$60-\$300 with touch screens from 5"-12". I received an Echo Show 5" for Christmas that I use in my Kitchen. They can do all the voice commands with the addition of these features and commands:

Go home, "Shows calendar, weather, time, news, etc." Video calls/chat "Some cameras follow and zoom in on who is talking"	Open stream player launch ABC News/channel 91 Show me travel videos on Youtube Watch movie trailers, news briefings, Prime Video content, and live TV and sports with a qualifying Hulu subscription
Show me the front door camera "view/notifications" "Some are smart home hubs for other smart devices"	Show me my photos "Amazon photos or Facebook" Show me pictures of cats
Show me a lasagna recipe What can I make with broccoli What should I make for dinner What wine goes best with fish	Show my calendar Show timers Show the weekend forecast Show me movie show times
What can you show me	Scroll up/down/left/right
Open Silk "Web browser – Youtube, Facebook, Amazon.com, add other favorites"	
Lots of other commands and skills	

**Additional Links and Information**

Between Thanksgiving and Christmas an Amazon Dot was selling for \$20-\$25. Current prices at Target and Amazon are \$34.99. Sites like Camel Camel Camel can help you see price history. Google Home Mini Speaker is currently on sale at Office Depot OfficeMax for \$24.

Questions or comments can be sent to [TCKreuzer@gmail.com](mailto:TCKreuzer@gmail.com)