

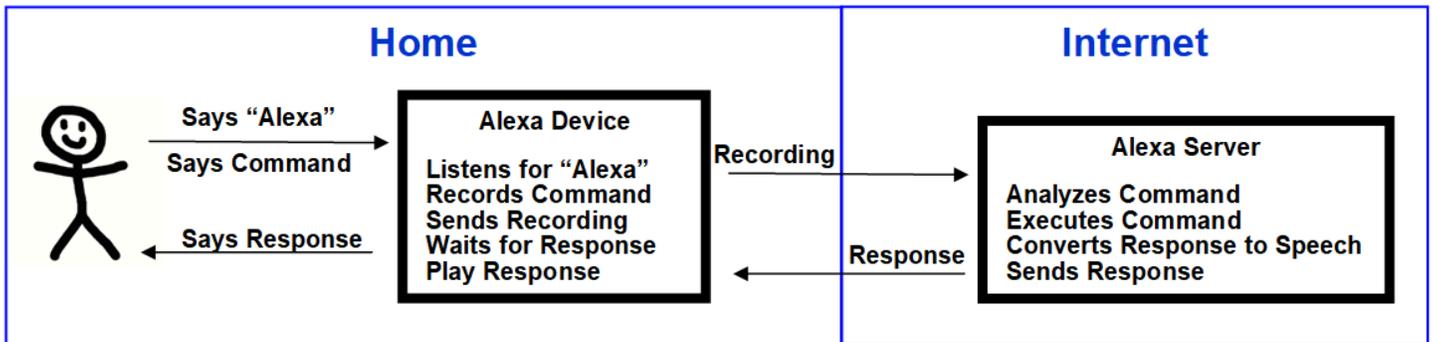
Voice & Video Assistants

We have been waiting for home automation ever since the "Jetsons" house in 1962. About 1 in 4 U.S. adults own an assistant. 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 five years voice assistants have been joined by video assistants. Voice assistants start at \$20 on sale.

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, the 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. To setup, you install the "Amazon Alexa" App on your phone or tablet. This enables you to set hundreds of features and use that device like a smart device.

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 your home WiFi or free Carondelet WiFi. 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 two in my dad's apartment. I use them to turn on lights, space heater, radio, podcasts, news, weather, sports scores, my calendar, grocery list, pill reminder, music, questions, time/date, kitchen timer, 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. Some Commands require that you setup a "Skill" to connect to services. Below is a small sample of the millions of commands they can respond to.

Time, Date, Weather, News, Will it snow on Sunday What time is sunrise on Wednesday What's my Flash Briefing "News and Weather"	Turn on severe weather alerts Tell me about the movie [Encanto] What's on ABC TV tonight
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 "can add for 30 minutes"
Stop/Off/Exit/Shut up Volume Up/Down/to 5/mute/unmute	Open any Podcast, Play AARP Perfect Scam, Previous, Rewind Open TED Talks

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 “or prescription reminder” How long is left on the timer, Stop the timer
Remind me on Sunday to call Fred Jones Remind me three times a week to water the plants	Add an event to my calendar, My Calendar 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], Twenty Questions Make me a sandwich, Roll dice, Flip a coin
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 Tom Kreuzer, Call 651 123-4567, Answer, Hang up Send a message, Play messages, Play notifications Call for Help (Emergency contact gets a message & call)	Send a text “uses your phone” Drop in on the living room “Permissions need to be set” Announce [Dinner time] “all your devices get message”
Turn on/off the lamp, Dim the lights Turn on the Fan/Heater for 1 hour Set the temperature to 72 degrees Unlock the front door	Close my garage Control Most Smart TVs (On, mute, vol, chan) Open Guard skill “Security listens for trouble” Open Burglar Deterrent Care Hub replaced by Alexa Together (\$20 month)
What time is it in New York, What is the 3M stock price What can I say, Let's chat, Talk to Dr A.I. Who is the smartest person in the world	Procedures “Alexa programming (Sunset lights on, commands, have fun) Millions of other commands and Skills Open Skill Finder

Video Commands

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 \$49-\$300 with touch screens from 5"-12". I received an Echo Show 5" for Christmas three years ago that I use and we put one in my dad's apartment. They can do all the voice commands with the addition of these features and commands:

Drop in [Permission must be given, baby monitor, parents] Video calls/chat “Some cameras follow and zoom in on who is talking” Skype or Zoom calls [contact name or phone number] Activate do not disturb (no calls or interruptions)	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 Play the trailer for Wonder Woman
Show me the Back door “Camera view/notifications” Show smart devices [connect and control] “Some are smart home hubs for other smart devices”	Show me my 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 my to-do list, Show my shopping list Show the weekend forecast Show me movie show times
Scroll up/down/left/right, Go home Open Silk “Web browser – Youtube, Facebook, Amazon.com, add other favorites”	Take a selfie (Add to Amazon Photo or can send) Scan (scan barcode to add to shopping list) What am I holding (hold product - tells you what it is)
What can you show me	Millions of other commands and Skills

Additional Links and Information

Sign up for Alexa eMail “Echo Newsletters” in your Amazon account to get tips and commands about once a week. Use a Google search to find how to do just about anything. I recommend you disable Amazon Sidewalk which allows other people's devices near your home to connect by borrowing a sliver of your bandwidth. In the Alexa app go to Settings\Account Setting\Amazon Sidewalk\Disable.

Carondelet Tech Help Resources: <https://carondeletvillage.org/tech-help-resources/>

Questions or comments can be sent to TCKreuzer@gmail.com

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