

Amazon teams up with Spotify for wireless speaker

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The Amazon Echo is displayed on January 7, 2016 in Las Vegas, Nevada

Amazon said Thursday that its Echo wireless system will play songs from Spotify as the retail giant delves further into the booming sector of streaming.

Echo, which went on sale last year, is a wireless speaker that responds to

voice commands to carry out tasks such as looking up information on the Internet or setting alarms.

Through the tie-up, Echo owners will be able to play instantly from the vast catalog of Spotify, the Swedish company that is the leader in on-demand music streaming.

Echo, which responds when addressed as Alexa, will look up and play songs on Spotify when it hears the verbal request.

The tie-up will only be available in the United States and for paying subscribers of Spotify, which also offers a more popular free tier.

"Music is one of the most popular features on Amazon Echo, and Spotify has been one of the most requested services, so we're excited to bring it to our customers today," Toni Reid, director of the program at Amazon, said in a statement.

Amazon is a behemoth in both physical music sales and downloading, with the company the second most popular site after Apple's iTunes to buy digital music.

But streaming has rapidly expanded in recent years, offering a key source of growth in the industry as sales of both CDs and digital downloads weaken.

In a sign of future trends, Apple has bet big on streaming with the launch in June of Apple Music.

Amazon is already involved in the sector through Prime Music, which lets members of the company's Prime shopping membership club stream tracks online for no additional cost.

The New York Post reported last week that Amazon chief executive Jeff Bezos was looking to launch a more thorough stand-alone streaming service to compete directly with Spotify, Apple Music and other rivals.

The latest project, however, would appear to encourage Amazon customers to subscribe to the premium service of Spotify, which has actively sought partnerships with major companies including a tie-up with coffee chain Starbucks.

Echo already offers several other [music](#) services including Internet radio station Pandora.

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