

# Amazon, targeting smart homes, adds devices to 'Alexa' family

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Amazon will sell the Amazon Tap, a \$130 voice-activated portable speaker, and the Echo Dot, which can control light switches, thermostats and other connected devices by voice command

Amazon unveiled two devices Thursday in the family of its "Alexa" voice-activated personal assistant, aiming for a bigger foothold in the smart-home market.

The US online giant announced it would sell the Amazon Tap, a \$130 voice-activated portable speaker, which connects to Wi-Fi or a mobile hotspot "to play music, read the news, provide weather reports, and even order a pizza."

The second device is called the Echo Dot, a basic \$90 sibling of the original Echo which can control light switches, thermostats and other connected devices by voice command.

The Dot will only be made available to customers with existing Amazon devices, and may only be ordered with the voice command, "Alexa, order an Echo Dot."

Amazon launched its effort in 2014 with its Echo speaker, using the same kind of artificial intelligence employed by Apple's Siri, Google Now and Microsoft's Cortana, among others.

Internet titans such as Apple and Google are eager to make their platforms into hubs that exploit the powers of smartphones, tablets or other devices to control entertainment, information, temperature, lighting and more in smart homes.

The platform could let Amazon jump ahead in that race with the first device in homes that will be listening and ready to act whenever people might think of something they want or need to buy.

Amazon has been adding partners to its Alexa platform, including the Spotify streaming music service, which it made a feature of its Fire TV, enabling voice searches for viewers.

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