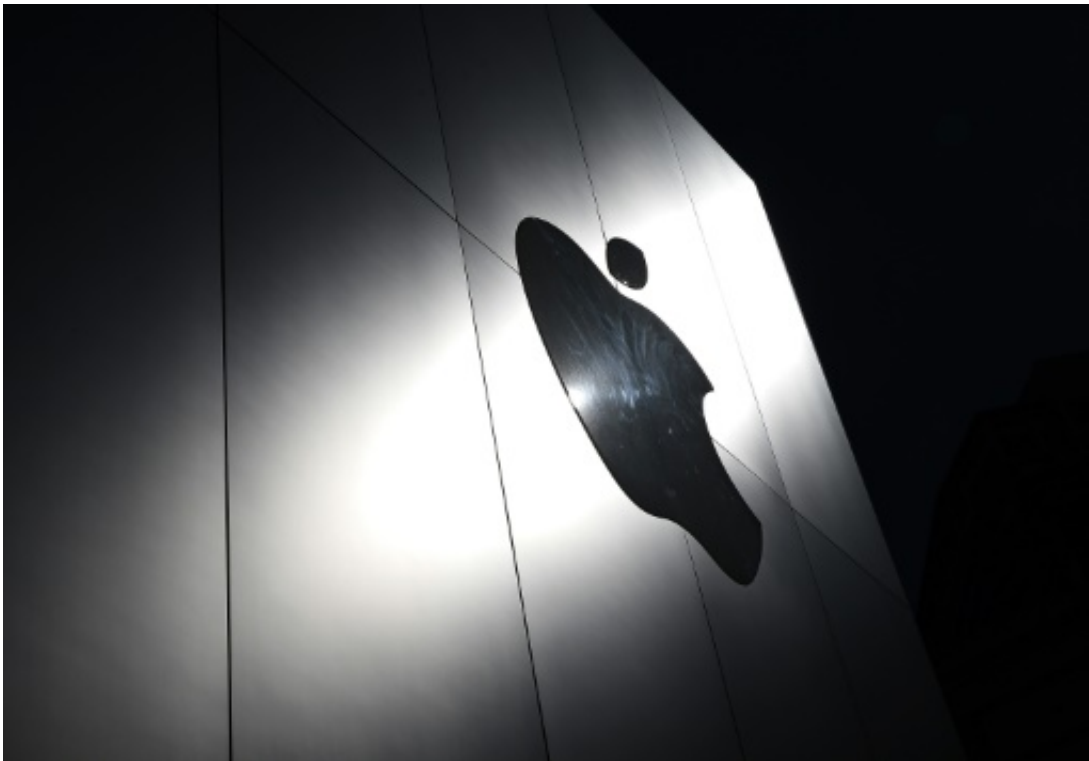


Apple readying Siri-powered home assistant: report

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Apple is set to launch its own home hub powered by digital assistant Siri, in a challenge to Amazon's Alexa-powered devices, according to a report

Apple is preparing to launch a connected speaker to serve as a smart home assistant in a challenge to Amazon Echo and Google Home, a news report said Thursday.

The [speaker](#) powered by Apple's digital assistant Siri may be unveiled at the annual Worldwide Developers Conference next week in Silicon Valley, Bloomberg News reported.

The new device—speculation about which has been swirling for months—could entice software makers to tailor applications or services for a broader array of Apple hardware.

Like Echo and Home devices gaining traction in the market, an Apple [home](#) assistant could let people control lights or appliances and interact with the internet using voice commands.

Apple did not reply to an AFP request for comment on the report.

Amazon recently unveiled the latest member of its family of devices powered by its Alexa digital assistant—this one with a touchscreen.

Amazon has dominated the category of connected speakers since 2014 when it introduced its first Echo, which responds to voice commands and allows users to order goods or rides and control connected appliances.

A survey released last month by research firm eMarketer found Echo speakers held 70.6 percent of the US market, compared with 23.8 percent for Google Home and 5.6 percent for others including Lenovo, LG, Harman Kardon and Mattel.

Samsung-owned Harman Kardon meanwhile recently announced the release of an Invoke speaker powered by Microsoft's digital assistant Cortana and integrating Skype for making calls using the device.

At its annual developers gathering in May, Google announced an array of new partnerships and capabilities for Home smart speakers.

Meanwhile, Apple has been under pressure to wow the world with a new creation as its culture-changing iPhone is about to turn 10 years old.

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