Prime Day broke records, Amazon says

July 14 2017, by Angel Gonzalez, The Seattle Times

Amazon.com said its third Prime Day, held Tuesday, broke records and was the biggest day of sales in the company's history.

The e-commerce giant didn't disclose a figure but said purchases made by members of its Prime loyalty program, to whom the discount extravaganza is geared, were 60 percent higher than last year.

Amazon also said more people joined the $99-a-year loyalty program on Tuesday than on any other single day in the company's past.

The success of the self-proclaimed retail holiday - designed to lure new members into the Prime ecosystem and to stress-test Amazon's logistics capabilities ahead of the key holiday shopping season - was boosted by the popularity of the company's gadgets.

The item that sold the most was the Echo Dot, a device that connects to speakers and harbors Alexa, Amazon's voice-activated digital assistant. The Dot's bigger cousin, a speaker called the Echo, was also a hot-selling item, and so were Fire tablets and Kindle e-book readers, the company said.

Amazon's blockbuster sale broke a record set on last year's Prime Day. Analysts with Cowen estimated on Wednesday that the latest Prime Day brought in about $1 billion in revenue for the company.

But "just as important" was that it seemed to attract more new members, said the analysts, who estimate that more than half of U.S. households will have enrolled in Prime by the end of the year.

Prime Day also bodes well for another part of Amazon's business: Alexa. Tech giants from Amazon to Apple are betting big on voice computing, which experts say is the future of the field. More Echos in customers' hands mean an edge for Amazon's emerging platform.