

Review: Could Fabriq's Chorus be a better way to talk to Alexa?

September 28 2017, by Jim Rossman, The Dallas Morning News



Amazon's Echo line of products is pretty popular.

The original Echo, the smaller Echo Dot, the portable Echo Tap and the newest Echo Show with its color video screen have all tried to show us how to take advantage of Alexa.

But Amazon took a calculated risk by opening the Alexa voice control service to third-party developers, and the program is starting to produce some interesting new devices that will compete with Amazon's own offerings.

I've reviewed a few products that have the Alexa voice service inside, but none were slick enough to replace any of Amazon's own products in my house - until now.

I've been reviewing the Chorus Smart Speaker, the second generation Alexa device from Fabriq (\$99.99, thefabriq.com).

The Chorus is available from Amazon.com, Target.com and in Target stores, as well as from Fabriq's website.

The original Echo sold for \$179 and is Amazon's only model touted to have speakers enough to fill a room with sound.

The Echo isn't available from Amazon as I write this - refurbished models are available for \$79.

The Dot, Tap and Show all have speakers, but none are what I'd call high fidelity.

The Chorus' vertical cylinder design is reminiscent of the Echo, but the Chorus isn't quite as tall and it's covered in a colorful patterned cloth.

Unlike the Echo, the Chorus is battery-powered. It sits on a round plastic puck that provides charging power to the Chorus through metal contacts. Fully-charged, the Chorus can play for up to six hours.

The Chorus has Wi-Fi and Bluetooth built-in so you can also stream from your smartphone if you're out of Wi-Fi range.

Fabriq's first Alexa speaker, the \$49 Riff, required the user to press a button to invoke Alexa. The Chorus is Fabriq's first model to use voice-activated Alexa, just like the Echo.

Voice-activation puts the Chorus on a level playing field with Amazon's own Echo offerings.

"We were able to deliver tremendous value when we launched the touch-activated Riff last year, but knew we were leaving a large portion of the market untouched without a voice activated unit," said Jordon Sansom, director of marketing for Fabriq.

The Fabriq Chorus hides eight watts of power under its colorful cover. The Chorus has two 2-inch drivers and a 2-inch passive radiator that, to my ears, produce better sound than the Echo. The Chorus is 6.3 inches tall, but the charging base adds another inch.

The Chorus is available in four patterns.

Fabriq speakers use their Wi-Fi chips to enable up to 10 Riff or Chorus speakers to work together for multiroom audio, which is very nice.

Amazon did enable multiroom audio on its Echo, Dot and Show devices recently.

Fabriq's multiroom is like Sonos' system. You can use the Fabriq app to play the same music on all connected speakers or you can play different music on each one.

There are a few Alexa features not available on the Fabriq speakers.

The Chorus was able to play all my streaming music that I can play on my Echo Dot, but to play Pandora, I couldn't use Alexa, I had to connect

through Bluetooth and use the Pandora app on my phone. You can't add the Chorus to a multiroom audio system with other Alexa devices.

Also, Alexa calling is not available on the Chorus.

CONCLUSION

The Fabriq Chorus combines a lot of features I like from Amazon's different Echo devices.

It has outstanding sound, like the Echo (better, actually), it has the convenience of battery power like the Dot and you can connect via Bluetooth to stream directly from your phone.

Today, I'd choose the Chorus over the original Echo.

—

Pros: Great sound (for its size), portable, connects to other speakers for multi-room audio.

Cons: Not all Alexa functions are supported.

Bottom Line: A [speaker](#) that's better than the original Echo for less money.

©2017 The Dallas Morning News

Distributed by Tribune Content Agency, LLC.

Citation: Review: Could Fabriq's Chorus be a better way to talk to Alexa? (2017, September 28) retrieved 23 April 2024 from <https://phys.org/news/2017-09-fabriq-chorus-alexa.html>

This document is subject to copyright. Apart from any fair dealing for the purpose of private

study or research, no part may be reproduced without the written permission. The content is provided for information purposes only.