

# Amazon Alexa devices in hotels raise privacy concerns for some

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Amazon recently announced a program called Alexa for Hospitality, bringing its digital voice assistant to hotels and vacation rentals. The devices will likely make requesting services more convenient, but some

people have privacy concerns.

A woman in Portland, Oregon, recently said the Alexa in her home [recorded](#) a conversation between her and her husband and sent the audio recording to a co-worker of his. Amazon said the device must have been woken up by a word that sounded like "Alexa" and then mistakenly heard a series of requests to send the recording as a voice message.

But as long as there's a way to turn off the devices, there's no need to worry, said Chris Clifton, a professor of computer science at Purdue University, who studies [data privacy](#).

"There is a mute button on the [device](#) which, when pressed, makes Alexa unable to hear anything," he said. "You could also just unplug it."

Amazon says Alexa will be able to transfer guests' requests for services like housekeeping or room service, control temperature and lighting, find local restaurants and attractions, and more. There are a few things to be aware of for guests who do want to harness the convenience Alexa offers.

"One is the ability for hotels to customize offerings. I'm not sure how secure the Alexa skills toolkit is, but I suspect we might find that it records things people might not have expected," he said. "The other is a feature listed as coming soon: connecting your own Amazon account. If you don't adequately ensure that those accounts are disconnected before new guests check in, that could cause all kinds of problems."

Provided by Purdue University

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