

# From Echo to Ring doorbell and Fire TV, are you comfortable Amazon with controlling your smart home?

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Amazon acquired another startup this week, the maker of the beloved tech product Eero, a mesh router that improves dead Wi-Fi spots in the home. To that, you might have said, OK, so?

Sure, it's just another purchase by the world's largest online retailer. But, more importantly, it's an indication of how Amazon wants to go further than just making our homes "smart." It wants to turn our dwellings into the "Amazon Home."

Think about it for a minute.

Your guests are greeted at the door with a video doorbell from Ring, a company Amazon bought in 2018. They enter a [living room](#) where an Amazon Echo speaker plays music as it waits for voice commands.

Then they head to the kitchen, where an Amazon microwave heats up dinner—made from food bought at Amazon-owned Whole Foods, naturally—as you turn down the volume on the Amazon Fire TV Edition television.

You ask Alexa to dim the smart lights, using the one smart product in the home not owned by Amazon (yet), the Hue system by Philips N.V.

And the Wi-Fi, the guts of the system, without which none of the other products could operate, is being controlled by the latest device bought by Amazon, the Eero.

Are you comfortable with Amazon controlling so much of your home? On Twitter, some weren't this week.

"Terrible news," @RickWilliams wrote in a tweet. "I liked that they (Eero) seemed privacy conscious and were very responsive. Now they are going to be owned by one of the biggest data suckers out there. Scares me a bit."

"This is terrible news for my privacy concerns," tweeted @SteveRiggins to Eero. "I don't let Alexa in my house for those reasons and now you back doored me."

Amazon and Eero downplayed the privacy issues, saying the mesh router doesn't share Wi-Fi information. But Amazon, as Eero does now, will soon know how you use your Wi-Fi, whether that's on computer or a mobile, just by being in your home network.

Techies loved Eero because it solved an important problem: helping to wipe out spotty Wi-Fi service across the home. In his 2016 review, USA TODAY's Edward Baig said, "my dead zones appear to be a dead issue."

The Eero was the first such product in a category soon emulated by Google, Netgear, Linksys and others. A three-pack of the Eero (for multiple rooms) sells for \$500; Google undercut it in its version to \$250.

Now, with Amazon taking on Eero, "you can't really escape Amazon in the home," said Carolina Milanesi, an analyst with Creative Strategies. "One big company is delivering too many devices."

Patrick Moorhead, an analyst with Moor Insights, isn't bothered, however.

"Amazon may have most of the home but this is no different from the iPhone or Android phone or (smart)watch worn in the home," he says. Because every step and move is being monitored by Apple and Google through the smartphone.

Rival Google only has two smart home products, its Eero-like Google Wi-Fi system, and the Nest thermostat, while Apple doesn't market any under its brand name.

Neither Apple nor Google have been as aggressive in acquiring smart home products. And when a company like Amazon has dibs on more products in your house, that means rival ones can't be easily used. Once you're all in on Alexa, is there room for a Google Home Hub video speaker, which operates on the Google Assistant? Because you can't use both interchangeably.

A perfect example is Sonos One, the connected speaker that currently takes Alexa commands. Later this year, Sonos will update the product to accept Google commands as well—but not at the same time. The user will have to assign one or the other as the personal assistant of their choice.

Amazon famously missed out on smartphones by trying to get into the market too late after Apple and Google. It since built a giant device business with e-readers, tablets, connected speakers, security cameras and now, smart [home](#) products.

A recent visit to one of the Amazon Books stores in Los Angeles shows just how aggressive Amazon is getting in this category, with a large section of the store devoted to "Smart Home Made Easy."

The cost of entry based on what was on display: a good \$1,000. Now add the price of an Eero, which Amazon could drastically lower from its current \$500 price tag. For the Ring, Amazon slashed its price in half from \$199 to \$100.

Great news for consumers. But at what cost?

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