

Televisions getting Siri-style personal assistants

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"If you are sitting on your couch you can just use your voice to control your TV, set-top box, cable-box or whatever," Vlingo's Chris Barnett told AFP as the [Consumer Electronics Show](#) got underway in Las Vegas.

"The TV will talk back to you in Virtual Assistant mode; ask what you want to see and drill down into what you are looking for," he continued, providing a demonstration. "It is like Apple's Siri, only for your TV, only better."

Apple built sassy Siri personal assistants into [iPhone](#) 4S models released in October.

Siri [artificial intelligence software](#) was derived from research conducted to make computers more intuitive at understanding and working with soldiers in action.

Siri understands context so people can speak

naturally when asking it questions.

It helps make calls, send text messages or email, schedule meetings and reminders, make notes, find local businesses, and get directions. [Siri](#) will even perform mathematical calculations if asked.

Vlingo said its Virtual Assistant software lets people tell televisions what they want it to do or find.

Viewers could ask assistants to find shows with particular actors or in preferred genres, or tell televisions to record or rent specific films or [television programs](#).

Microphones will be built into televisions or, more likely, remote controls to let Vlingo software listen to viewers, according to Barnett.

Some television makers are expected to let people chat with Vlingo virtual assistants using smartphone "apps" or build microphones into screens.

The software could also tap into microphones in accessories such as Kinect for [Xbox 360](#) videogame consoles.

"The Vlingo Virtual Assistant for TV is designed to modernize that thing your grandfather once called a 'remote control'," Barnett said.

"Everyone deserves their own assistant and Vlingo will make this a reality on TVs this year."

Massachusetts-based Vlingo, which is being bought by speech recognition speciality firm Nuance, said that it has deals with major electronics makers to put the software into television hardware to be released this year.

It did not disclose names of companies, citing confidentiality agreements.

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