

Apple's smart speaker HomePod may get Face ID: report

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Apple's new Face ID technology may be coming to a living room near you.

The Taiwanese supplier for Apple's smart [speaker](#) HomePod hinted it expects smart speakers in general to have 3-D facial-recognition technology, the Japan-based Nikkei Asian Review reported. While the supplier, Inventec Appliances, did not say HomePod will one day include

Face ID, market analysts believed it was an inevitability, with one predicting to Nikkei it will happen by 2019.

Face ID, which so far is available only on the iPhone X, has been the breakthrough technology for Apple this year, thanks to the suite of new cameras and sensors on the front side of the phone. Beyond unlocking an iPhone, Face ID also proved to be a hit with Animojis, custom animated characters that use the user's voice and mirrors their facial expressions in the Messages app.

HomePod may be only the latest Apple product to include Face ID. Recently, Bloomberg reported Apple is working on a redesigned iPad that would have the home button replaced with Face ID for next year.

At Inventec Appliances' earnings conference meeting, CEO David Ho said smart speakers with Face ID and other AI features are likely but he was not sure if they would be a hit.

"We see trends that engineers are designing smart speakers that will not only come with voice recognition but also incorporate features such as facial and image recognition," said Ho. "Such AI-related features are set to make people's lives more convenient and to make the product easier to use."

Despite a December launch date, it is still unknown when exactly the HomePod will be released. Announced first at the Worldwide Developers Conference in May, Apple boasted about the \$349 HomePod's high-tech speaker abilities with artificial intelligence powered by Siri.

Apple is expected to ship only 50,000 HomePods in 2017 to the United States, United Kingdom and Australia, Taipei-based Fubon Securities analyst Arthur Liao told Nikkei. But Liao thinks HomePod shipments

will rise to 4 million in 2018.

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