



Forget about those shiny new Pixel phones, tablets and speakers that Google announced this week at a splashy event in New York. Or a new talking video speaker that takes on Amazon's Echo Show with a focus on Google visuals like mapping, calendar, and, of course, all that YouTube content.

That's cool. But the stuff we care about—you and I—that we would actually use, comes down to Google's attempts to clone us.

Consider some of the artificial intelligence advancements that the company touted this week.

Google will soon be able to:

—Make calls for you

—Screen your calls and transcribe them on your behalf, in real time.

—Take pictures, without your having to bother snapping the shutter, when it senses that your subject is smiling or making a goofy face. (All of these, only if you have a Google Pixel phone.)

Let's begin with Duplex, the controversial new AI tool that has Google placing calls to restaurants and hair salons, to set up appointments without you having to do it.

First announced in the spring, Google said this week that Duplex will begin tests this month for Pixel owners in four cities—San Francisco, New York, Atlanta and Phoenix.

Think about this for a minute: You announce, "Hey, Google, call the Chart House and get me a table for two at 7 p.m.," and your phone then does the work for you, having the Google Assistant app's robot call the

restaurant in the background. You soon get a notification confirming the reservation. (Or get informed that 7 p.m. was busy and you were pushed up to 8 p.m.)

There's two minutes saved.

Cool for you, but weird for the restaurant staff that already gets too many odd phone calls. Now, a computer is calling and sounding awfully realistic.

In a note to businesses this week, Google said they'll always be able to tell that they're speaking to a robot, and that there will be an opt-out feature to refuse the calls.

Speaking of calls we don't want, here comes Google's Call Screen.

This is aimed at scaring away telemarketers. Instead of hanging up immediately on them, as so many of us do, Google has another idea—let the Google Assistant take care of these rodents.

Get a caller you don't recognize?

Click a button and let Google figure out who is on the other line, and whether you really want to take the call. It's a variation of the old screening of calls picked up by answering machines that we used to do.

Here's what the caller will see: "Hi, the person you're calling is using a screening service from Google, and will get a copy of this conversation. Go ahead and say your name and why you're calling."

In [real time](#), you will get a transcript and that chance to decide whether or not to pick up. I love this and hope Apple feels inspired to steal it for iPhones. But let's be real: This isn't going to solve the problem.

Telemarketers will hang up immediately, and the real culprit is the automatic robocalls, which the Call Screen feature won't be able to help with.

But it's a start in the right direction.

So, if you're keeping score, Google has already introduced "Smart Compose," to automatically fill in your e-mails in Gmail with suggested words, to have Google fill in for your brain and take the work out of composing. It will make calls and screen them for you. It now automatically tells me every day how long my commute will be, based on my driving history (thank you, Google) and autoplays me endless videos it knows I like on YouTube without my having to ask. (And it is usually right on with my tastes.)

But we still have to do the basics with Google. In searches, we type or say queries aloud. No robots have swept in yet to replace our curiosity. But give Google a few years, right?

©2018 USA Today

Distributed by Tribune Content Agency, LLC.

Citation: Hey Google, you don't really want to replace me, right? (2018, October 16) retrieved 21 September 2024 from <https://phys.org/news/2018-10-hey-google-dont.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.