



When Will Siri and Alexa Bring AI Into Your Home?

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Alexa, talk to me.

If you've been living under a rock or just returned from a 10-year mission to Mars, you might have missed the advent of something called 'artificial intelligence' on the tech scene. Microsoft has introduced ChatGPT, Google has released Bard, and Meta recently introduced LLaMA. Companies in virtually every industry and profession are incorporating one or more of the generative language programs into what they do for and with consumers.

But... What about the obvious devices for intelligent human interaction, like Apple's Siri in smartphones, and Amazon's Alexa device? When are those applications going to start talking with us like intelligent beings?

In fact, as you read this, Amazon is previewing a smarter and more conversational version of Alexa, powered by a new large language model that was custom-built for voice interactions. Programming prioritizes getting real-time information off the web, home control, and, of course, accessing home entertainment. The next AI version of Alexa will be able to remember your preferences and answer follow-up questions without the need to restate any of the prior contexts.

Meanwhile, the Echo camera and voice input in Alexa are being programmed to understand non-verbal cues—body language, if you will. Alexa's next iteration will converse more naturally, and process nuance and ambiguity. In a recent test, users could say: 'Alexa, every weekend at 9:00 PM, make an announcement that it's bedtime for the kids, dim the lights upstairs, turn on the porch light and switch on the fan in the bedroom.' Alexa would program that series of actions to happen at the right time.

Apple is playing catch-up with its Siri smartphone assistant, though from a tech standpoint, its natural language model, Ajax GPT, rivals ChatGPT's feature set. Apple is handicapped a bit by the fact that Siri lives in, and runs off of, a device (with limited computational resources), rather

than being cloud-based (with unlimited computational resources) like Alexa. The company reportedly has three teams working on language and image models, in an attempt to automate complex tasks using natural language. Expect future iPhones to hold more intelligent conversations with their owners, and generally be more useful and understanding.

Sources:

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