

Huawei joins smart speaker crowd with standout router

September 2 2018, by Nancy Owano



Smart speakers represent a product category that will not disappear any time soon. A combo smart speaker-Internet router is in the news. It is the combo part that has won the company its hoped-for chatter.

Huawei announced a [speaker](#) that can behave as Alexa while connecting

your house to the Internet. ("To our [surprise](#), it's not Google's Assistant, but instead, the Chinese tech giant decided to partner with Amazon's Alexa voice assistant," said *GSMArena.com*.)

Welcome to the AI Cube. Well, it does not look like a cube, but never mind. The company would hope you pay more attention to what it is rather than what it is not; it is a smart speaker that can double as an Internet router; it packs a 4G portable router.

That is special for something like a smart speaker, said reports. *Trusted Reviews* said it was "a full-on LTE router complete with 802.11ac Wi-Fi."

It's as if Huawei got some warnings; there is enough action going on in the smart speaker business without you; think up some edge. Huawei found a differentiator.

The Verge: "Huawei's angle is to leverage its tech lead in networking [equipment](#) by also endowing its AI Cube with a slot for an LTE SIM card, making it a 4G hot spot, and an Ethernet port, allowing you to use it as a home Wi-Fi router as well as an Alexa-enabled speaker."

"Rather than having two separate devices—a router and a smart speaker—they can combine the two, thereby saving space," said Matthew Hughes in *The Next Web*.

On a big screen behind Huawei's presenter at IFA, there is the writing "superior 4G [router](#)" and "Alexa built-in." Hughes wrote, "The Huawei AI Cube supports LTE Cat6 speeds (300Mbps down). It also boasts compatibility with 802.11ac, which means it's dual band, and capable of [working](#) on 2.4GHz and 5GHz channels. In terms of LAN performance, users can expect data transmission speeds of up to 1,200Mbps."

No reports had information on price. The Huawei AI Cube will be released in [Europe](#), but at the time of this writing there was no word if the AI Cube was to land in the US.

Vlad Savov in *The Verge* was one of the writers who went after the what's-next details during the briefing. "Price was also a matter that Huawei wasn't yet ready to discuss, saying it'll be announced closer to the time that the device goes on sale. Europe will get the AI Cube 'in the Christmas season,' the US may or may not get it, and Huawei has no plans for this exact model in its native China."

Savov's conclusion: "Huawei is leaving a lot of questions unanswered with its Europe-bound AI speaker. All I can say for sure is that it's not a cube."

Nonetheless, Jon Porter in *Trusted Reviews* said that "it's a very intriguing product that we can't wait to get into our [labs](#) and try out for ourselves."

Alex Dobie in *Android Central* described its design and behavior. "Physically, the Huawei AI Cube is shaped like an elongated Google Home, complete with fuzzy speaker [grille](#) down below, and a section that lights up when interacting via voice."

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Citation: Huawei joins smart speaker crowd with standout router (2018, September 2) retrieved 2 May 2024 from <https://techxplore.com/news/2018-09-huawei-smart-speaker-crowd-standout.html>

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