

Google Nest hacker finds evidence of Google considering getting rid of 'Hey Google' hot words

October 23 2020, by Bob Yirka



Jan Boromeusz is a recognized Nest Home hacker with what many in the press describe as a proven track record in discovering new Google Nest features before they are announced or released by Google. He makes his announcements via YouTube videos. In his latest effort, he has created a video that shows what he describes as Google considering the possibility of eliminating the "Hey Google" hot words. He also reveals how he finds these secret features.

Google Nest is a brand of smart speaker developed and sold by Google—Google makes several varieties of the smart speaker, but one feature they all have in common is the means by which they are activated—users must say the words "Hey, Google" or "Okay, Google" before asking questions or making commands. In his video, Boromeusz suggests Google may be reconsidering this requirement.

In his [video](#), Boromeusz shows the [video screen](#) on his Google Nest Hub Max, which includes an option called "Dogfood"—a mode not normally available to users of the Max. He reveals that the option allows him to bring up other menus related to "Blue Steel," which is also unavailable to the general user. He demonstrates that by setting this option to "on," his Nest Hub ceases requiring him to say "Hey, Google" before making commands or queries.

To operate his [device](#), he simply says what he wants and the device responds. He notes in the comments section that the device detects his presence and uses that as a prompt to activate. It is not known which sensors the device is using to detect Boromeusz's presence, but the list is

rather short. The Nest Max comes equipped with a [video camera](#), but it also has ultrasound sensing technology; thus, either could detect the user's presence. In either case, the [user interface](#) responds accordingly—going into the background when nothing is detected and then appearing automatically when it detects movement.

It is not known if the find suggests that Google is seriously considering doing away with vocal activation commands—there are serious privacy issues at stake. But the find certainly suggests Google is exploring giving users the choice of using the option or not.

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