

Amazon and Disney unveil new Alexa-like assistant, 'Hey, Disney!'

September 28 2021, by Eve Chen, Usa Today



Credit: Unsplash/CC0 Public Domain

Alexa is getting some company.

Amazon and Disney have unveiled an "entirely new persona" called

"Hey, Disney!"

"It marks the first time that we're making another [voice assistant](#) available alongside Alexa on Echo devices," Aaron Rubenson, Amazon's vice president of Alexa Voice Service & Alexa Skills told USA TODAY ahead of Tuesday's announcement.

"Hey, Disney!" will be available both in room at Disney Resort hotels and on supported Amazon Echo devices at home.

"It's going to give guests the ability to sort of interact with our beloved characters in entirely new ways" said Dan Soto, vice president of Technology and Digital for Disney Parks, Experiences and Products.

What can 'Hey, Disney!' do?

"Hey, Disney!" was designed to make the Alexa experience even more magical with things like jokes, interactive trivia with your family, personal greetings from our characters, soundscapes and more," Soto told USA TODAY. "It will absolutely include authentic character voices, original recordings, unique audio environments inspired by our films and our destinations around the world and over 1,000 magical interactions for our guests to discover."

When will 'Hey, Disney!' debut?

"Hey, Disney!" is expected to roll out next year.

How much will 'Hey, Disney!' cost?

"Hey, Disney!" will be free for guests to access on Amazon Echo devices in Disney Resort hotel rooms.

It's not yet clear how much it will cost to buy on the Alexa Skills Store for use at home. Details will be released on [amazon.com/heydisney](https://www.amazon.com/heydisney).

How do I use 'Hey, Disney!'?

Like Alexa, the voice assistant has its own unique wake words: "Hey, Disney!"

Where can I use 'Hey, Disney!'?

While the bulk of "Hey, Disney!" features will be available both at home and at Disney Resort hotels, hotel guests will have additional offering through Alexa for Hospitality.

"You can ask 'Hey, Disney!' things like, 'What time is the park open? Where can I get Italian food? When's the next bus to Epcot leaving my resort?'" Soto said. "You can even do some functional things like order more blankets or towels to the room."

"This is a solution that lets Disney deploy and manage devices at scale and also create unique experiences to enhance the experience for for guests," Rubenson said.

Will 'Hey, Disney!' work with Disney Genie?

This fall, Walt Disney World and Disneyland will launch a new, free trip-planning tool called Disney Genie.

Soto said Disney is looking at ways to access things like itineraries and that other opportunities may follow down the line.

What will 'Hey, Disney!' sound like?

While users can hear from a host of beloved, familiar Disney characters through "Hey, Disney!," Soto and Rubenson said the voice assistant will be a "brand new, unique identity" that is "different than Alexa's voice."

What about privacy concerns?

"For both Disney and Amazon, protecting the security and privacy of our guests is paramount," Soto said, noting that guests will have to opt in, not opt out, to use "Hey, Disney!"

Beyond having same privacy protections as other Amazon products and devices, Rubenson said: "The in-room experience in particular is designed with privacy in mind and so no audio is stored by default. Also just to be clear, customers don't log in with Amazon to use the experience, so no personal information is transmitted about the guests at all when they interact with 'Hey, Disney!'"

He noted that Echo microphones in hotel rooms can also be manually turned off.

"At home," Rubenson said, "if customers, for their own personal devices, choose to purchase the 'Hey, Disney!' experience, that operates like our other child-directed experiences, so it requires verifiable parental consent before anybody can even use it, and ... as a customer, you have access to your voice recordings, you can delete them, you can choose to have them deleted automatically, all of the same, sort of privacy controls you expect are part of that experience."

What's next?

While "Hey Disney" is the first custom-branded and tailored [voice](#) assistant to be launched using Alexa Custom Assistant, Amazon has not

hinted at what others could be coming down the line.

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Citation: Amazon and Disney unveil new Alexa-like assistant, 'Hey, Disney!' (2021, September 28) retrieved 6 May 2024 from <https://techxplore.com/news/2021-09-amazon-disney-unveil-alexa-like-hey.html>

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