

Portal vs. Nest Hub Max and Echo Show 8: The video display competition is set to heat up at the holidays

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A new AI tool created to help identify certain kinds of substance abuse based on a homeless youth's Facebook posts could provide homeless shelters with vital information to incorporate into each individual's case management plan. Credit: CC0 Public Domain

On Tuesday, Facebook will release its second-generation Portal, one of three new entrants into the "Video Display" wars to compete for your shopping dollar during the holidays.

Facebook is trying again to take on Google and Amazon, striving to convince consumers they want a home unit for making [video calls](#), looking at their photos on a digital photo frame, listening to music and watching [video clips](#).

Plus, Facebook is going further by bringing the concept to TVs, but not until November.

Here's how the three compare:

Facebook Portal

The original edition launched in fall 2018, to

surprisingly strong reviews: Critics were surprised they liked it, considering Facebook's poor history with privacy.

However, the company saw poor sales, according to Bret Kinsella, editor of the Voicebot A.I. website. Facebook ended up with an anemic 2% market share, compared to 59% for Amazon and 39% for Google.

Critics liked Facebook's webcam, which moved beyond a static image by being able to follow you as you moved around the room and zoom in and out on other people. But sales were low due to concerns from consumers about having a Facebook [video camera](#) and audio recorder in their home, says Kinsella.

Still, Facebook hasn't given up. The new edition, it says, is "designed for privacy," and "You can easily disable the camera and microphone, or completely cover the camera with a single switch.has an off/off button to turn off the microphone and video camera."

The new 10-inch Portal now has a [lower price](#), at \$179, and has been redesigned to more resemble a photo frame, one that can be viewed horizontally or vertically. Facebook also introduced a smaller, 8 inch version for \$129. The Portal TV product is slated for release Nov. 5.

Currently, Facebook is the pricing leader, with the lowest tab, compared to \$229 for Google's Nest Hub Max and Amazon's Echo Show. But Amazon is known to discount heavily during the holidays, and has a new edition of the Echo Show, the Echo Show 8, an 8-inch version slated for November, at \$129.

More on both below.

You can make video calls via Facebook Messenger (c)2019 U.S. Today or Whatsapp, listen to music on Spotify, Pandora and iHeart Radio, watch video clips from CNN and Fox News and see your photos from the Facebook library. Portal also has an internet browser, which lets you call up websites like YouTube and Facebook. Distributed by Tribune Content Agency, LLC.

Nest Hub Max

Google's renamed product (Google Home Hub last year) is larger, at 10 inches, and can make video calls, which the original version couldn't do.

You can make calls via Google's Duo app, watch videos on YouTube, see your photos from Google Photos and listen to music and podcasts on Pandora, Spotify, YouTube Music and Google Podcasts. The Hub also features the usual array of features from the Google Assistant, like settings alarms and calendar items, answering trivia and opening your day with news briefings.

The new version is \$229. The original, which doesn't include a camera for video calls (and is now called the Nest Hub), sells for \$129.

Amazon Echo Show 8

The new, smaller 8-inch \$129 edition won't be out until Nov. 21, and like the others, touts video calling (to folks who have an Echo Show), seeing your photos displayed from the Amazon Photos collection, and watching video.

Amazon has less video than Google, and way more than Facebook. The world's most popular [video](#) network, YouTube, isn't available on the Echo Show without a workaround, which means you won't have as much access to all those cooking recipes beyond the ones Amazon offers from the Food Network, but you can watch movies, original series and old TV shows via Amazon Prime, the \$119 yearly subscription service for entertainment and expedited shipping, as well as the Hulu subscription service.

The workaround is access via a browser, which doesn't respond to voice commands.

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