

Voice Activated Devices



Maryl Gearhart
Pat Hom
Howard Kirsch
Celie Placzek
Mike Safer
Monty Sher

Ashby Village & UCB Retirement Center
December 18, 2018



University of California, Berkeley
RETIREMENT CENTER

Overview

Why voice activated devices?
Practical applications
Entertainment
Support & Information
Q & A

Why voice-activated devices?

A “**smart speaker**” that uses voice recognition and artificial intelligence to find information and do tasks

Small bookshelf speaker that varies in size, speaker quality, and decor

Wifi-enabled

NOTE: Smartphones, tablets, and computers can also be operated by voice.

3

Why voice-activated devices?

Accessible virtual assistant

- *voice-activated: “Alexa” or “Hey Google”*
- *a matter of **practice***

Reduces social isolation

Practical

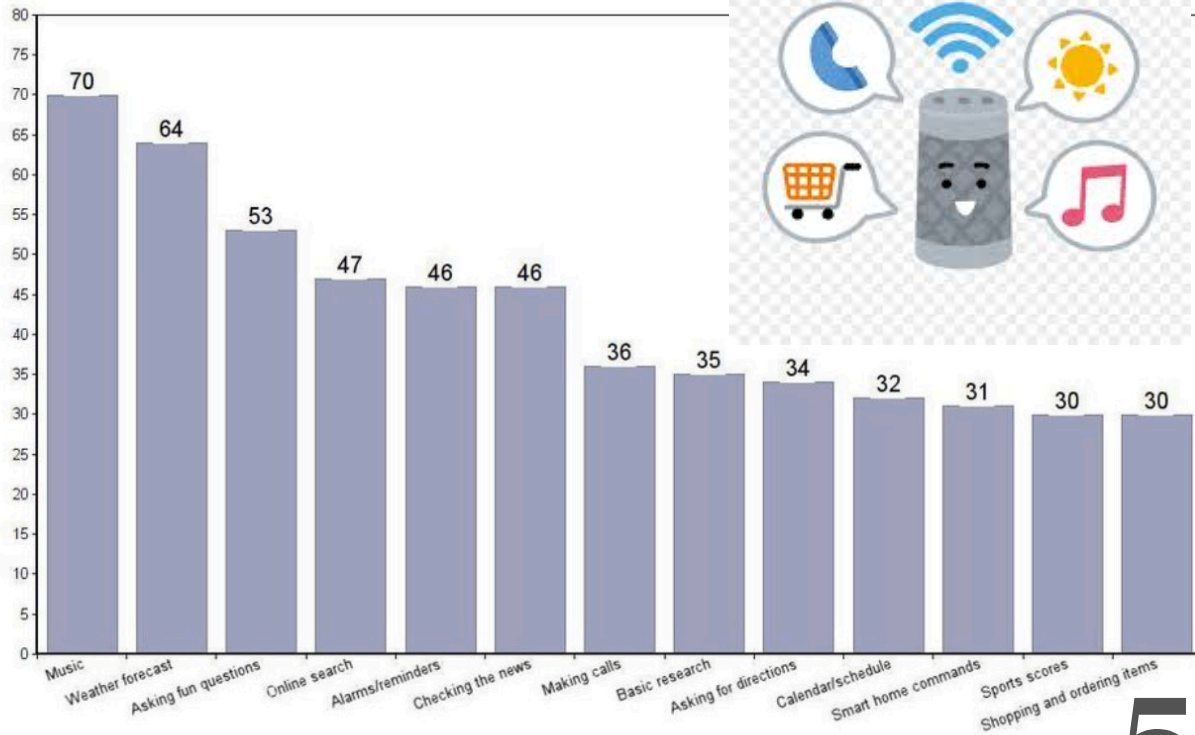
- *“Set a timer for 10 seconds.”*
- *“Turn it up/down,” “volume up/down”*

Entertaining

- *“Tell me a **joke**.”*

4

WHAT ARE USERS ASKING THEIR SMART SPEAKERS TO DO



Adobe Digital Insights (source) | Atherton Research Music Streaming Report, Dec 2018

5

Practical applications: *Information*

Date & time

Measurement
conversion

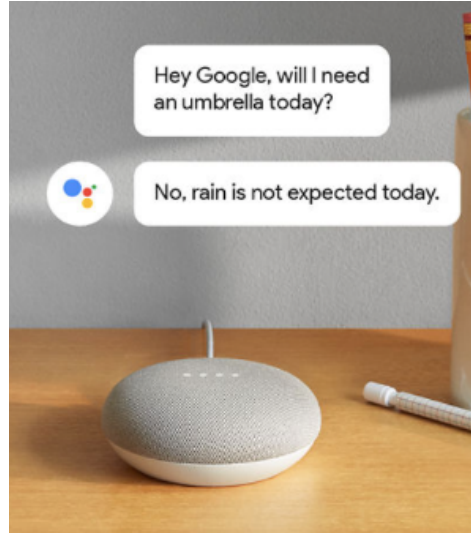
Timers & alarms



6

Practical applications: *Information*

Weather
Traffic
Location
Events
Sports



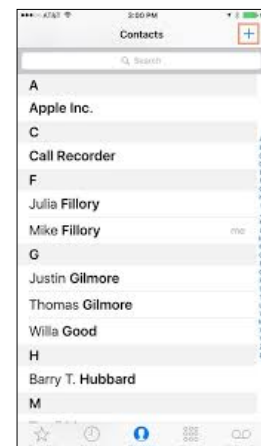
7

Practical applications: *Phone calling*



Connect with Contacts for outgoing calls

- Alexa: import Contacts when you set up
- Google Home: import contacts.google.com, or use an Apple app for Apple Contacts



Examples:

- “Alexa, call ...”
- “Hey Google, call ...”



8

Practical applications:

Medical alert

You can't call 911 from Alexa or Google Home.

Add emergency numbers to Contacts:

Albany	528 5770 (Fire) or 525-7300 (Police)
Berkeley	981 5911
Emeryville	596-3737
Oakland	444-1616 (Fire) or 777-3211 (Police)
Richmond	233-5223 (Fire) or 233-1214 (Police)

9

Practical applications:

Medical alert

Amazon Echo Connect

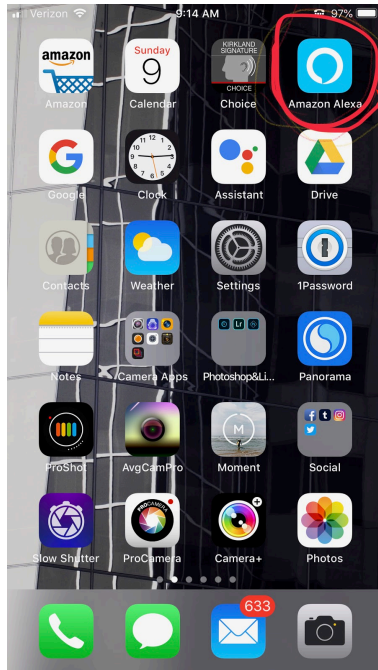
- turns home phone into a speakerphone
- you *can* call 911



10

Practical applications:

Shopping



Download the Alexa app

11

Practical applications:

Shopping

Alexa, add mustard & jarred olives to my grocery list

Making your grocery list

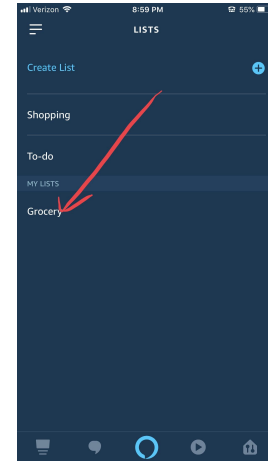
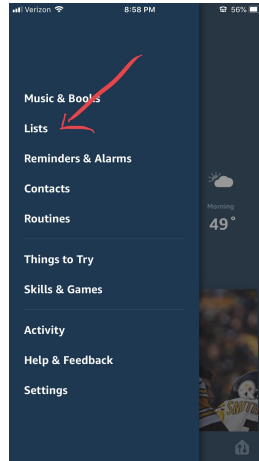
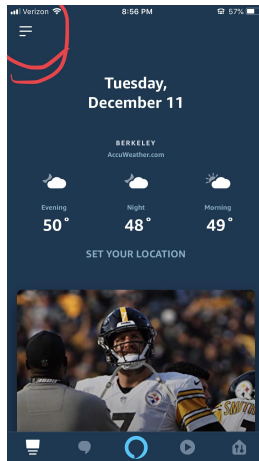
- Open the Alexa app on your phone, and sit by Alexa
- Dictate your list
 - * “Alexa, add milk to my grocery list.” *Alexa replies, “I’ve added milk to your grocery list.”*

12

Practical applications: *Shopping*

Using your grocery list

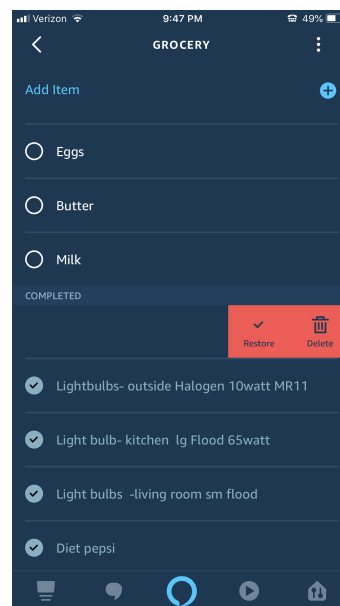
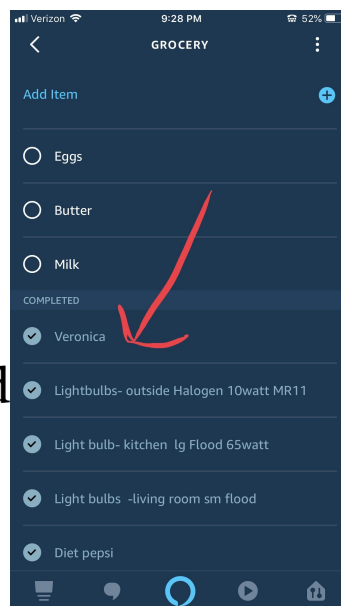
- Open Alexa app & select three bars
- Select “Lists”
- Select “Grocery List”



13

Practical applications: *Shopping*

- Adding
- Completed
- Deleting



14

Entertainment: *Music*



Amazon

Google

Streaming services that do not require an account; just ask for a genre or artist

- Amazon Music
- iHeart Radio

- Google Play Music

Streaming services that require an account and/or require you to create stations by genre or artist using a computer or tablet

- Spotify
- TuneIn
- Pandora
- Apple Music (after Dec 17th)

- Spotify
- Pandora
- Deezer

15

Entertainment: *Music*

To hear a selection

- “[wake word], play music.”
- “[wake word], play [artist or genre] radio.”
- “[wake word], play [artist or genre] with [streaming service].”

16

Entertainment:

Music

To play music through stereo speakers

Google Home:
Chromecast audio

- digital output



Alexa: *Echo Input*

- has microphone



17

Entertainment:

Radio and news

Radio stations

- “[wake word,] play [your radio station].”



News

- “Alexa, play my flash briefing.”
- “Ok Google, what’s the latest news?”
- “[wake word] ask CNN for the news.”

18

Entertainment:

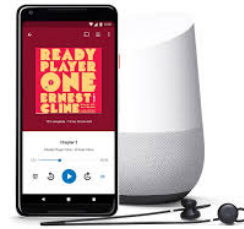
Podcasts & Audiobooks

Podcast

- “Play *Snap Judgment*”
- “Pause” “Resume....”

Audiobooks

- sync with Audible account



19

Support & Information:

Comparison

Both devices

- connect to wi-fi
- have similar controls
- can mute their microphones
- can combine multiple actions in one command
- support multi-room audio
- can make phone calls
- connect with other devices
 - * bluetooth speakers from phone or tablet
 - * TVs using streaming sticks
 - * outbound voice calls to regular phones

20

Support & Information: *Comparison*

Amazon Echo plusses

- features
 - * louder (3-4 dB difference in max volume at 1')
 - * more wake word options (not just "Alexa")
 - * settings more configurable
- skills
 - * better shopping queries
 - * more skills with third-party brands, e.g., Lyft, Uber, Domino's
 - * new partnership with Apple Music
- connectivity
 - * other speakers via jack or bluetooth or Echo Input
 - * receive calls from other Echos & home phone w/ Echo Connect
 - * smart home devices
- range of products & applications - e.g., screen Echo, cars

21

Support & Information: *Comparison*

Google Home plusses

- features
 - * sound quality better (depends on device)
 - * ease of use - more conversational queries
 - * option for either male or female voice
 - * more languages understood and spoken
 - * recognizes up to 6 people's voices
- skills
 - * access to comprehensive Google database of information
 - * access to your Google accounts - e.g., email, calendar
- connectivity
 - * via Chromecast audio

22

Support & Information:

Set up & privacy

Set up

- Smartphone app: Google Home or Alexa
- How-to articles and Youtube directions
- Ask for assistance

Privacy

- Your device is only
listening for its name ...



23

Future workshops

Monthly second Tuesdays 10:30am-12pm

- Jan 15 *Home phone options*
- Feb 19 *The Ashby Village website*
- Mar 19 *Gmail*
- Apr 16 *Television (streaming, Roku, etc.)*

Other events planned

- *Medical alert devices and services*
- *Photography with iPhone & Android phones*

24

Contact us!

Maryl Gearhart	marylgear@mac.com
Pat Hom	phom@berkeley.edu
Howard Kirsch	howard.k65@gmail.com
Celie Placzek	celiemp@gmail.com
Mike Safer	mike@mmsafer.com
Monty Sher	montysher@gmail.com



University of California, Berkeley
RETIREMENT CENTER