

Amazon's Newest Product Announcements and Implications for
Privacy By Sara Brown J.D. Candidate 2022 | October 12, 2019

At their most recent event, Amazon introduced a range of potential new Alexa-enabled products that aim to further ingrain the company's voice assistant into the everyday lives of their consumers.

Much of the proposed hardware comes in the form of [wearable](#) gear that will allow Alexa to go where users go, moving toward an even more constant stream of connection between consumer and AI tech.

The introduction of "Echo Buds" marks Amazon's entrance into the wireless headphone market, allowing Alexa to stay in your ears all day, and for Amazon to compete with Apple's AirPods. A pair of normal-looking eyeglasses, "Echo Frames," are equipped with microphones that give you the ability to conversationally engage with and task Alexa without ever having to open your phone. The last of the accessory-like category of products, "Echo Loop," is a ring that keeps Alexa on your finger—the company's take on smart jewelry (think, Apple watch, but, no screen)—and accessible via whisper. The event also announced the launch of several updates to existing Echo product lines, an [interactive Alexa doorbell](#), celebrity voices as Alexa, and a venture into the culinary world with an updated Alexa Smart Oven. While the eyeglasses and ring are part of the ["beta" group of products](#), meaning they are still being tested and only available by invitation, the advances that these products embody in the mobility and integration of AI into all facets of human life have significant implications for data privacy.

While Amazon has retained a significant advantage in the market for home AI integration through Alexa, Google and Apple, however, have dominated the mobile AI market because their versions of Alexa are seamlessly built into their respective smartphone models—a product that Amazon lacks. As Amazon takes steps to become a larger player in an on-the-go AI world, it marks a transition toward a more intimate relationship between consumer and device, and between the entities that control the information consumers feed to those devices. The volume of information received by the voice assistants of the modern world is rapidly increasing and, so too, the privacy concerns about what happens to customer data, when data is being collected, and how it is protected.

Amazon began to address some of the [questions about privacy](#) and their products. The company is aware of the various concerning privacy matters that have arisen regarding Alexa devices, including that the devices are sometimes indirectly triggered and listen to conversations that they were not meant to. For starters, customers have had the option since May to command Alexa to delete anything she heard that day, but David Limp, the senior VP of Amazon, acquiesces that this is an area where they want to improve.

It seems that, especially in light of these new products on the cusp of formal roll-out, the most crucial area for refinement of voice assistants is when and how they listen, and how much control customers have over when their data is at risk.

