

We tested all 4 Amazon Echo wake words. Here's what we learned about Alexa

If you're tired of seeing your smart speaker light up when you're not talking to it, it's time to give it a new name.

Does your Amazon Echo's blue ring light up when you're talking on the phone or TV and didn't say "Alexa"? Why is it listening for a command when nobody uttered the wake word? The issue likely isn't that your Echo is always listening, it's that similar-sounding wake words keep triggering your Echo speaker, like "Lexus." It might be time to assign Alexa a new name.



We've tested the options against each other to determine which one accidentally activates the Echo least. It's not Alexa.

Why not Alexa?

When I go into the Alexa app to listen to my voice recordings, there are always multiple entries of me having conversations with coworkers (pre-self-quarantine days, of course). In those recordings, I didn't use the wake word. The Echo likely heard something that sounded similar to "Alexa." For example, in one recording, a coworker said "the last time...", which the Echo might have figured sounded like "Alexa."

My list of recordings is also full of commercials playing in the background because someone on TV said the magic word. Words that can trigger your Amazon Echo (\$60 at Amazon) when you have "Alexa" set as the wake word include Lexus, Alexis, Elixir and Lexa.



Other Amazon Echo wake words you can use

Although Alexa is automatically set as the wake word when you unbox your device, you have other options to name your smart speaker. For example, you can change the device's name to **Computer**, **Amazon** or **Echo**. Of course, you'll want to select the one that you'll say least often in conversation.

For example, if you constantly talk about how your computer is running slow, you probably don't want "Computer." Also, words like "consumer" and "commuter" will trigger your smart speaker if you do.

If you're an Amazon shopaholic that always says "let me see if I can find it on Amazon," you shouldn't name your device that. Words like "Amazonian" and "parmesan" can also activate your speaker when the wake word is Amazon.

I have an Ecobee thermostat, and changing my wake word to Echo created all sorts of chaos. Any time I said "Ecobee," my smart speaker activated. Other words that can trigger your device when using this wake word are "gecko," "metro," "expecto patronum" (yes, from Harry Potter) and the phrase "fact of," and in "the fact of the matter."

If you don't know which wake word you'll accidentally trigger the least, try each of them for a few days at a time. After you've tested them, check the Alexa app privacy settings to see which word triggered your speaker the most without you deliberately activating it -- that will be the wake word you'll want to use.

To change the wake word, just say "Alexa, change the wake word" and make your selection.

The best Amazon Echo wake word of all

In my testing of all these wake words, the one that was triggered the least amount of times for me was "Computer," with "Amazon" as a close second. Using "Echo" as the wake word proved to be about the same as using "Alexa," so both are out for me.

I'm looking forward to the day when Amazon will let us come up with our own unique wake words. I know my picks: Knight Rider, Wall-E or maybe even Minion.

Ready for more advice for your smart speaker? Here are six Amazon Echo settings you won't regret changing, four Alexa skills you should enable first and how to customize Alexa for a better Amazon Echo experience.

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