

Alexa delays drag on as vision for AI agent struggles to emerge

Article

The news: Amazon's big pitch for a smarter **Alexa voice assistant** keeps hitting roadblocks.

- Amazon's artificial general intelligence (AGI) team is scrambling to make Alexa's operations cost-effective, per [The Financial Times](#).

- Technical challenges are disrupting Amazon's attempt to take on **ChatGPT**, and delays could continue well into 2025.

What's the goal? Amazon wants to transform Alexa from a [task-oriented assistant](#) into a full-on AI agent that can suggest restaurants or adjust smart home settings based on user behavior.

"The next generation of these assistants and genAI applications will be better at not just answering questions ... but also taking actions. And you can imagine us being pretty good at that with Alexa," Amazon's VP of investor relations **David Fildes**, said on its Q3 earnings call. However, an effective AI agent needs to be reliable and accurate, something Alexa has yet to accomplish.

Capability clash: Amazon cut access to an [Alexa beta](#) that struggled with hallucinations and smart home actions.

- Controlling devices is one of Alexa's key functions. Amazon is struggling to connect a smarter Alexa with third-party devices and services.
- "Sometimes we underestimate how many services are integrated into Alexa, and it's a massive number," **Rohit Prasad**, Amazon's head scientist of AGI, said.

If a new Alexa can converse more smoothly but fails at basic tasks, users may abandon it.

Foundational models: In November, Amazon released [Nova](#), a new family of genAI models. These models could offer the speed, cost, and reliability to improve Alexa, per Prasad.

However, while the models generate video, image, and text, none process audio content, the foundation of Alexa's operations. Building Alexa on internal models, instead of external tech like [Siri's ChatGPT integration](#), could slow progress even more.

Our take: As Alexa development suffers, smartphones are featuring their own on-device AI agents that can perform tasks directly, which could render any Alexa upgrade unnecessary. If the company can't get an improved Alexa out soon, it may lose relevance.

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