

# Ring risks burning months of public trust-building with home surveillance drone

Article

**The news:** Amazon unveiled a Ring-branded at-home surveillance drone and an on-the-ground roaming robot.

- **Ring's Always Home Cam** (essentially a Ring camera strapped to a small drone) flies along predetermined paths in users' homes or those triggered by alarms, and lets users view streamed or recorded video to remotely monitor their homes.
- The **\$249 drone** is limited to just five minutes of flight time, and due to privacy concerns, can't be remotely controlled by its user.
- **Amazon's new roaming robot Astro** connects to Ring using cameras in its Echo smart screens to monitor rooms while a user is away.
- Though both devices are ready for release, they are currently limited to invite-only access.

**How we got here:** Ring's drone has faced skepticism from consumer privacy advocates since it was first announced over years ago.

- That backlash was made worse by Ring's **less** than stellar track record with user **privacy**, security, and **trust**.

**The bigger picture:** Though companies like Sunflower Labs, Nightingale, and Azure have offered their own surveillance drones for years, the market for small, affordable, indoor autonomous drones remains opaque.

- By limiting the drone's availability, Amazon can measure consumer appetites before deciding whether or not to add it to its list of product duds.

But interest in drones outside of surveillance and security is picking up in the US:

- We **forecast** that **delivery drone units will increase 76%** from 23,9000 units in 2021 to 69,610 in 2023

**How this could backfire:** Amazon—and Ring in particular—risk jeopardizing recent efforts to soften their image and regain user trust by doubling down on some of its most controversial products.

In response to a litany of privacy and security complaints, Ring spent much of this year attempting to correct the ship by adding and **expanding** its end to end encryption for video streams and adding **transparency** around how law enforcement requests data.

Though public trust in Big Tech companies has **dropped** across the board in recent years, a recent **poll** from YouGov and the Center for Growth and Opportunity shows customers are

relatively more comfortable sharing personal information with Amazon than its other competitors.

Unauthorized access to a home security device or a data leak featuring sensitive images captured inside a users' home could end up damaging Amazon's comparative trust advantage.

Source: Ring

