



7 Things about Amazon Echo

1 - What is it?

The Amazon Echo is classified as a set of smart speakers that is currently being developed by Amazon.com. Each Echo comes pre-installed with an intelligent personal assistant that can be activated by using the wake word "Alexa".

2 - How does it work?

The Echo has the capability to connect to your amazon account and various smart devices that are commonly used for home automation allowing you to place orders online or even control your smart home installation by simply speaking to Alexa.

3 - Who's doing it?

Since this product was developed to make the lives of it's users easier and it is popular with home automation they are a lot more commonly found in households than in work environments.

4 - Why is it significant?

This type of hands-free technology is just a showcase of how far we have come in the sense of technology and computing. Just 70 years ago we were attempting to store memory in a computer that takes up an entire room and now we are able to speak to one that is capable of controlling our environments.

5 - What are the downsides?

There are few downsides when it comes to the Amazon Echo, but there is one that is of concern. Since the Echo is controlled by voice it must be in a constant state of passive listening and some believe this to be an invasion of privacy, as the conversations being had around the device may be saved in some manner, but currently there is not too much concern about this as no negative impact has yet to be seen.

6 - Where is it going?

With the rate of advancement in technology, the Amazon Echo is already running near the front with it's abilities to play audiobooks, control smart devices, making to-do lists, setting alarms, streaming podcasts, order products/food, real-time traffic updates, and more. But the future only looks bright for this device as it becomes more useful over time by the creation of applications by users and the training of the software to better understand what the user is saying.

7 - What are the implications for higher education?

Instead of just being used to play music or dim the lights, the Amazon Echo can be used to study using audio playback from lectures to using one of the flashcards applications that are available.

