

Amazon turns its most capable smart speaker into a smart camera, too

Since debuting in 2019, Amazon's Echo Studio targeted users who wanted superior audio quality from their Alexa-based smart speaker. The latest Echo Studio adds another less-expected differentiator: an integrated camera.

The Echo Studio with Home Camera, released alongside a pile of other Alexa devices today, doesn't have many audio upgrades over the standard Echo Studio. Each speaker has one 3.75-inch high-excursion woofer and three full-range drivers. They both support Dolby Atmos and Amazon's proprietary algorithm for adding a surround sound-like effect to stereo audio. Per the devices' product pages, the speakers have lossless HD audio, Advanced Room Adaptation, and features for fighting noise distortion. Amazon announced the Advanced Room Adaptation today, saying that the feature "continuously tunes the sound to your space, automatically adapting to the room's acoustics."

Both speakers have four-microphone arrays and the same AZ3 Pro processor that Amazon introduced a year ago. The processor has an AI accelerator for using Amazon's Alexa+ generative AI chatbot.

The devices also have the same dimensions, even though the new Echo Studio With Home Camera fits in a 13MP camera.

The speaker can use the camera to see where you are and adjust audio volume "so your music or audiobook maintains the same volume as you move about."

Beyond audio capabilities, Amazon sees people using the speaker as a smart camera, allowing them to remotely check on a room in the home to see, for example, “how the dog is doing or make sure you didn’t leave the lights on.”

“Alexa can also see and understand what’s in front of the camera and help you in real time. Pull out a board game box and ask Alexa+ to explain the rules or hold up a cereal box, and Alexa can recognize it and help you reorder more flavors,” Amazon’s announcement says.

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