

Google is gearing up for an Alexa fight at CES

We're still a ways away from the official start of CES 2018, but the news is already starting to trickle out and everybody is setting up for the big show. And if the parking lot outside of the Las Vegas convention center is any indication, one of the biggest shows this year is coming from a company that has historically stayed quiet at CES: Google.

Last night we watched as Google began setting up a seriously massive installation, complete with the classic Google slide that you normally only see at its headquarters in Mountain View. The branding is all "Hey Google," which is a pretty good indication of what's getting pushed this year: the Google Assistant.

Our best guess is that this isn't so much about pushing the Google Home, Google Home Mini, and Google Home Max. Instead, it's an indication that Google wants to push back on the Amazon Alexa narrative at CES the past couple years. Alexa completely dominated CES last year, with integration announcements from all sorts of companies.



Photo by Dieter Bohn / The Verge

This year, we've already seen early Google Assistant integration announcements, and we fully expect more will be on the way. To push that story, Google not only has this huge booth, but has also thrown "Hey Google" on the Las Vegas Monorail and in various billboards across the city – and it also has what looks like a giant gumball machine at the main entrance of the convention center. The main booth in the parking lot is fronted by two gigantic video screens, as well.

Over the years, we've seen many CES announcements full of sound and fury, but they haven't always signified as much as the companies making them have hoped. But Google is clearly hoping to buck that trend, and it has a fairly recent update for speaker makers to improve the quality of the Assistant when it's included on third party devices.

<https://www.theverge.com/2018/1/6/16858000/google-assistant-ces-2018-ces-booth>