Google renames Assistant home devices, debuts $229 Nest Hub Max

reader comments

67 with 46 posters participating

Share this story

At its annual developers conference, Google expanded its line of Assistant home devices and renamed the entire family. The new Nest Hub Max is the 10-inch version of the existing Google Home Hub with some added features, and now the entire Assistant device family will fall under the Nest branding. So the Home Hub will now be called the Nest Hub, and so on.

The new Nest Hub Max has a 10-inch touchscreen, making it larger than the original 7-inch Nest Hub. This also puts it more in line with partner devices like Lenovo's Smart Display for the Google Assistant. Aside from Google's virtual assistant, inside the Nest Hub Max is a smart home control system that lets you ask the Assistant to turn on smart lights, adjust thermostats, and play music all from one device. It also supports thread similarly to Nest Connect, so it can control thread-compatible, low-power devices like smart door locks.

A glaring omission from the Nest Hub was a camera, but Google fixed that with the Nest Hub Max. The tiny camera that sits atop the display can work just like a Nest home security camera, allowing you to see what's going on in your home even

when you’re out. Many of the standard Nest features apply, including motion alerts and notifications when the camera detects an unknown person in your home.

The camera also supports video calling with Google Duo, so you can make and receive calls using Google’s video chat app from a bunch of different devices, including iOS mobile devices and any PC that has a Chrome browser.

A green indicator light shows when the camera is active. Google claims that video recording and streaming can only be done intentionally, and users can electronically disable the camera and mic by using the physical switch on the back of the Nest Hub Max.

Google also expanded on its optional Voice Match feature with the new Face Match feature on the Nest Hub Max. If you choose to enable this feature, the device’s camera will create a face model it can use to recognize you when you walk in front of the camera. When it successfully recognizes your face or the face of another person in your household, it will show information like reminders that are unique to your Google profile. All information used in Face Match is processed locally on the device, and the face models are encrypted, so your data doesn’t leave your home.

The larger design of the Nest Hub Max should make it a better multimedia device than the Nest Hub. The display can stream live TV from YouTube TV in addition to playing music from YouTube Music. It has a rear-facing woofer as well, which should help it pump out louder and better-sounding music than the previous hub.

The Nest Hub Max will launch in the US, UK, and Australia later this summer for $229, and the Nest Hub will remain available, but it will now cost $129 (down from $149).

https://arstechnica.com/?p=1501315