I asked Alexa Plus to tackle my to-do list – it mostly failed

One of the best features of Amazon's new Alexa Plus is that I don't have to "speak Alexa" anymore. I've been testing the voice assistant for about a week now, and it understands what I say, regardless of how I say it – there's no more need for precise phrasing to get Alexa to do what I want. This big shift underpins another headline feature of the revamped generative AI-powered assistant that I've been testing: agentic AI. But this one needs work.

The idea is I can talk to Alexa Plus as I would to a real personal assistant and ask it to do tasks, such as reserving a restaurant for my friend's birthday, finding an electrician to fix my broken sprinkler pump, or booking tickets to a Chris Isaak concert.

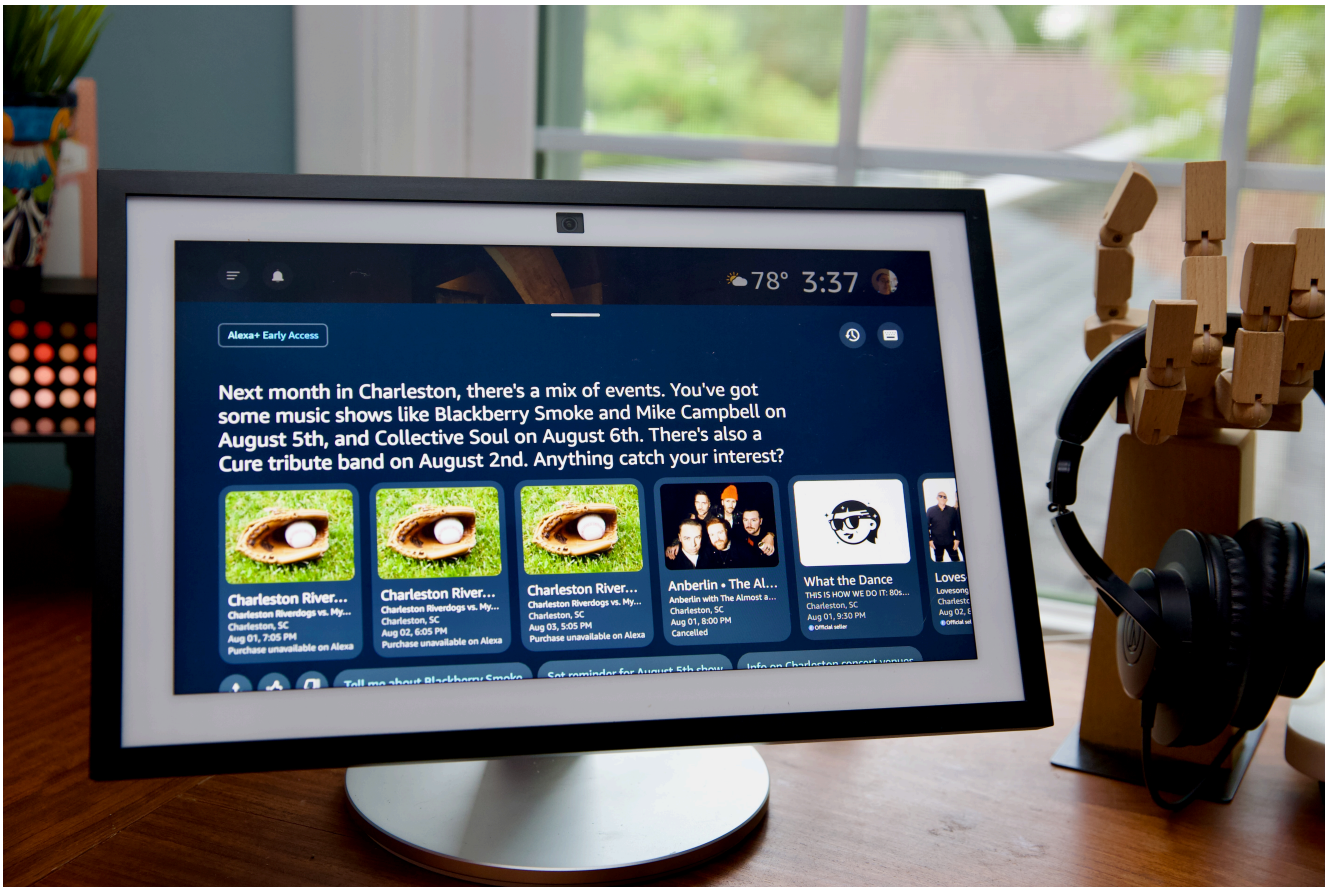
The assistant can then act as an "AI agent" and navigate online services on my behalf to book everything for me. Combined with better calendar management and the ability to remember things you tell it, Alexa's agentic AI has the potential to make the assistant much more useful.

Alexa's AI agent features are neither broad enough nor seamless enough to replace my real-life personal assistant: me

At least in theory. In reality, it's too limited. Alexa Plus relies on partnerships with specific services; it can't just roam the web and do my bidding. As of now, that includes Ticketmaster, OpenTable, Uber, and Thumbtack. While impressively, Alexa did manage to complete several steps, overall, the AI agent's current features are neither broad enough nor seamless enough to replace my real-life personal assistant: me.

Alexa Plus is still in an Early Access beta phase, and Amazon says more integrations are coming soon. These include ordering groceries by voice (via “several grocery providers in the US”), delivery through Grubhub, and booking spa visits through Vagaro.

These may be more useful to me, especially grocery ordering. I already use Alexa for my shopping list, but I then have to put everything into my Harris Teeter shopping app for pickup or delivery. If Alexa could take that list and add it to a service like Instacart, it would cut out a chunk of work for me.



Booking a concert was mostly a smooth experience.

Of the three agentic experiences I tested, the best was booking a ticket to an event through Ticketmaster. After a dodgy start – when I asked about sports events and was told about a youth basketball training session – I tried again. “What events are there in Charleston next month that you can buy me tickets for?”

Alexa produced a list of about 10 local sports events and concerts on the Echo Show 15 I was using (Alexa Plus is much more useful on a screened device). It told me, “You’ve got music shows like Blackberry Smoke and Mike Campbell on August 5th and Collective Soul on August 6th. There’s also a Cure tribute band on August 2nd. Anything catch your interest?”

I spotted a Chris Isaak concert in the list (I love a good *Wicked Game*) and told it to book me tickets. It found balcony seats for $98.15 each and asked how many I wanted, while also showing me more expensive options.

I selected the cheap seats, and it walked me through each step as it added them to my cart, ending with a checkout button where my credit card details were pre-populated. (I’d linked my Ticketmaster account in the Alexa app when I first set up Alexa Plus.)

I canceled before purchasing, because I don’t love a *Wicked Game* $200 much, and Alexa confirmed that the tickets were released. However, alarmingly, later that day, a pop-up in the Alexa app told me that *anyone* with access to my Alexa devices can order tickets. Amazon: I’ll take a PIN option here, please.



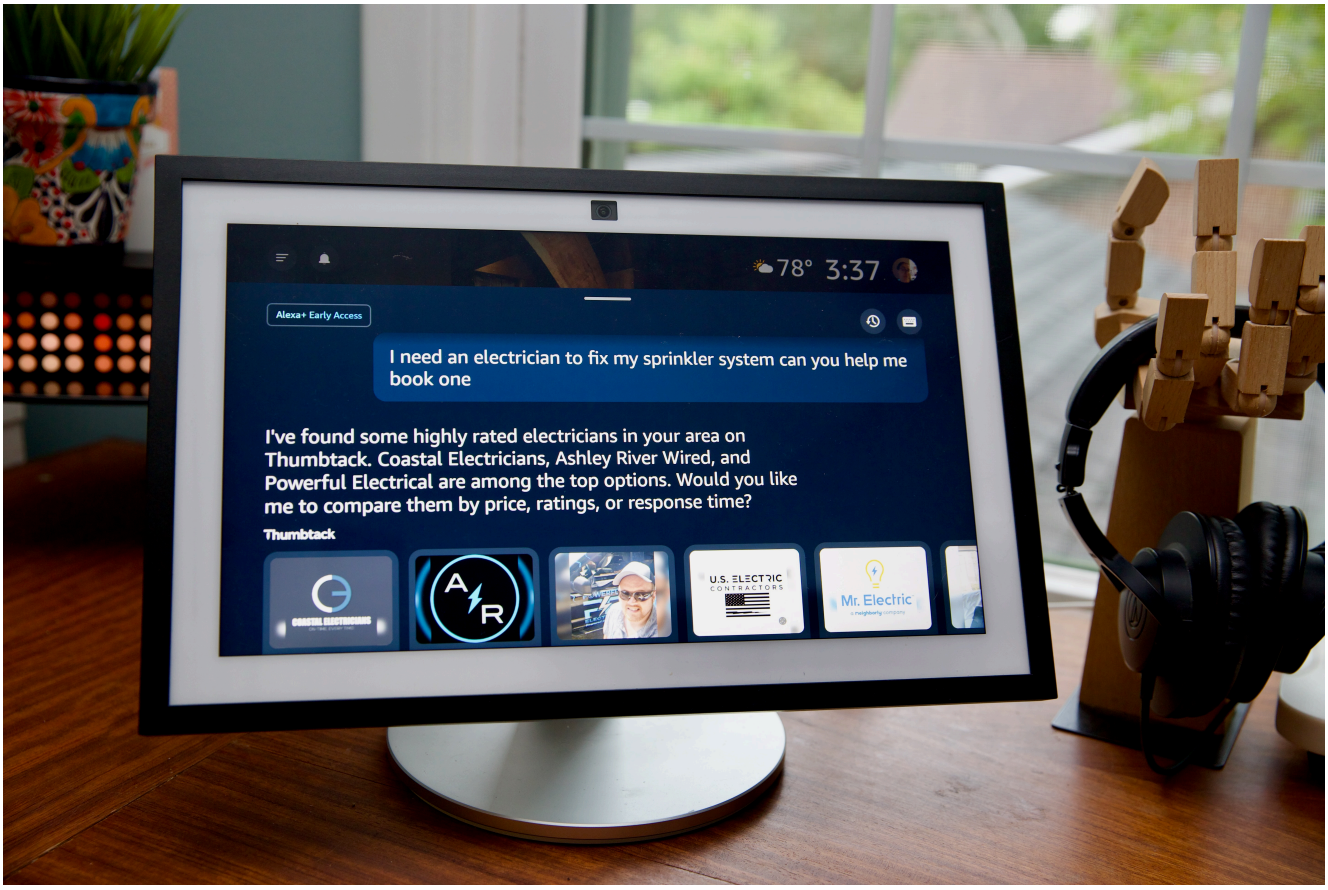
The assistant got all the way to the checkout and pre-populated my credit card details.

Next, I asked Alexa to "book a dinner for two in downtown Charleston for tomorrow night at 7PM." It returned three options, which is just sad – Charleston has a hopping foodie scene. I picked a French spot I'd been to before and changed it up, asking Alexa to "make it for two weeks on Friday." Unfazed, Alexa understood, pivoted and confirmed availability for Friday, July 31st, at 7PM, then asked if I wanted to book. After I confirmed, it said it would also add the reservation to my linked Gmail calendar. Handy!

Alexa had messed up the date

Or so I thought. I then received a text message from OpenTable, confirming my reservation for *Thursday,* July 31st. Alexa had messed up the date. I told Alexa to switch the reservation to Friday, August 1st, and it did, also updating my calendar.

While it eventually booked the table, Alexa took longer to do it and was less accurate than if I'd just opened the OpenTable app on my phone (or more realistically, the Resy app that most restaurants in Charleston use) and done it myself.



While Alexa found me an electrician, booking it wasn't successful.

Finally, I had Alexa tackle a chore I've been putting off for two years: finding an electrician. I've been meaning to get the circuit for my sprinkler pump fixed for ages. It's on the same one as my internet router, so when the pump kicks in, it trips the circuit – and down goes my Wi-Fi.

The big difference is that I did all of this *hands-free*

I told Alexa I needed an electrician to fix the sprinkler system, and asked if it could book one. It pulled a list of several "highly rated electricians" in my area via Thumbtack, highlighting the top three. I picked one and asked it to schedule a visit for a week from now. Alexa asked several

follow-up questions about my house and the specific issue — it felt a bit like filling out a webform with my voice. Alexa, then said it was working on sending the request through the Thumbtack website, and that I'd get updates soon.

A few hours later, still no word from Alexa. But I received an email from Thumbtack (the first of many…) and a text message from the electrician asking me to call or text to schedule an appointment. Not exactly the seamless set-it-and-forget-it experience I'd hoped for.

Still, the big difference is that I did all of this *hands-free*. I could be setting up dinner dates and finding electricians while cooking dinner or folding laundry. As a working mother of two, anything that helps with multitasking so I can complete my to-do list faster is welcome. But while the tech is impressive, the lack of depth and the failures I experienced in two out of my three tests mean I don't plan to rely on Alexa to do these tasks for me just yet.

Photography by Jennifer Pattison Tuohy / The Verge

https://www.theverge.com/hands-on/710035/amazon-alexa-plus-ai-agent-features-hands-on