Lenovo’s new smart clock swaps the Google Assistant for Alexa

Lenovo has a new smart clock, and unlike its prior models, the updated Smart Clock Essential comes with Alexa instead of Google Assistant – basically making it an Echo Dot turned smart clock. Most of the major changes to the clock have to do with Lenovo passing the baton to Alexa, but there are still some smaller changes worth noting as well.

You can still set an alarm, timer, and reminders, as well as control your smart home with the device; any product that’s compatible with Alexa will also work with the Smart Clock Essential. Additionally, you can stream audio from Amazon Music and other streaming platforms, which the smart clock plays from its 3W speaker, a spec that remains unchanged from the previous model.

The fabric case that wraps around the LED clock face is more pronounced than its predecessor, as it extends beneath the face and is visible when you look at the clock head-on. It also has a bit of a sloped design, similar to the way the Echo Show and Meta Portal’s cases are set at an angle.

[embedded content]

Aside from that, the segmented LCD clock face still displays the weather and time. According to Lenovo’s demo video, the display will also show basic animations when you ask Alexa for something – a feature the older Google Assistant model didn’t offer. You can tap the device to dismiss an alarm (something that didn’t work all too great in the previous model, as noted

in our review), and it also comes with a USB port so you can charge your phone or other devices. Lenovo notes that, like the older model, the new Smart Clock doesn’t come with a camera and also has a switch to mute the microphone.

In addition to the new Smart Clock Essential, Lenovo is also refreshing its Smart Frame with an update that Lenovo says will roll out in the first quarter of 2022. When the update arrives, you won’t necessarily need a Google Photos account to show off your photos in the frame — as an alternative, you can upload photos to the device’s built-in memory using your phone. You can also schedule and time virtual “sticky notes” that appear on the screen that contains a custom message for the other members of your household. Lenovo first announced the Smart Frame at CES in 2020 and initially offered it at half price through crowdfunding site Indiegogo.

Lenovo’s Smart Clock Essential is priced at $59.99. It’s supposed to become available this month and comes in gray or red. The Smart Frame is already available for purchase and costs $399.99.

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