Verizon’s Smart Display is real and it’s just as pointless as we suspected

We got our first look at Verizon’s Smart Display last month thanks to an FCC filing. Yesterday, Amazon confirmed the device’s existence as part of its Alexa Live presentation. It’s being introduced as part of the Alexa Custom Assistant program that allows third-party device manufacturers to add custom assistants built on top of Alexa technology to their products, and we regret to inform you that it looks just as useless as we first suspected.

Here’s what it offers: standard smart display stuff, like an eight-inch screen, 4GB of RAM, 16GB of storage, Bluetooth, Wi-Fi connectivity, and of course, Alexa. It also comes with LTE, a spec included in the FCC filing and confirmed to *CNET* following the announcement. But the purpose of 4G appears to be limited to providing connectivity while setting up or troubleshooting Verizon home internet. Amazon says this will reduce the need to “send service technicians to a customer’s house or have a customer call the Verizon Call Center for help.” So that’s kind of a narrow use case.

[embedded content]

There are also Verizon-service-specific commands that can be accessed by saying “Hi, Verizon,” like checking your bill or running a speed test. You know, things you can easily do on your phone or computer. You can ask Verizon smart assistant-type questions, like the current weather, but based on a promotional video published by Amazon it looks like Verizon will… just ask Alexa for you. Hmm.

If you ever thought to yourself, “Self, wouldn’t it be great to have a way to check my phone bill hands-free while I eat a sandwich in the kitchen?” then maybe you’ve just found your match. Otherwise, this doesn’t exactly look like the smartest of smart displays.

Verizon hasn’t revealed a price or firm release date yet; *CNET* reports that the display will be available later this year in limited beta testing with Verizon home internet customers.

https://www.theverge.com/2021/7/22/22588846/verizon-smart-display-amazon-alexa-echo-show