

NB: Try to keep your answers brief. There are 90 points to get, resulting in grades between 1 and 10 (0 points = 1, 90 points = 10)

1. Classical Philosophy of Technology (15 pt)

- a. Explain the difference between 'instrumentalism' and 'determinism' in philosophy of technology. (5 pt)
- b. Explain how it is possible for Karl Jaspers to defend both the thesis that technology threatens 'authentic human existence' and the thesis that technology is neutral. (10 pt)

2. Contemporary Philosophy of Technology (20 pt)

- a. Explain, with the help of one example, what Bruno Latour means by (a) the script of a technology; (b) delegation; and (c) blackboxing. (10 pt)
- b. Elaborate how Albert Borgmann would explain the use of Bluetooth speakers with the help of his 'device paradigm'. In your answer, use the concepts of 'thing', 'device', 'machinery' and 'commodity' (10 pt)

3. Human-Technology Relations (20 pt)

Indicate for the following technologies which type of relation human beings can have with them (embodiment, hermeneutic, alterity, background, cyborg/fusion, immersion). Explain your answers. More than one answer can be possible:

- a. A smartwatch (5 pt)
- b. The controller of a game computer (5 pt)
- c. The thermostat of a central heating system (5 pt)
- d. A navigation system in cars (5 pt)

4. Ethics of Technology (15 pt)

- a. Explain what Hans Achterhuis means by 'the moralization of devices'. (10 pt)
- b. Explain how technology, according to Borgmann, helps us to answer the question of what a 'good life' is. (5 pt)

5. Mediation (20 pt)

- a. Give a mediation analysis of the Amazon Echo system. (see other side of this exam) (20 pt)

Amazon Echo

From Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia

Amazon Echo (shortened and referred to as **Echo**) is a brand of smart speakers developed by Amazon.com. The devices connect to the voice-controlled intelligent personal assistant service Alexa, which responds to the name "Alexa". This "wake word" can be changed by the user to "Amazon", "Echo" or "Computer".^{[1][2]} The device is capable of voice interaction, music playback, making to-do lists, setting alarms, streaming podcasts, playing audiobooks, and providing weather, traffic and other real-time information. It can also control several smart devices acting as a home automation hub.

Overview of operation

In the default mode, the device continuously listens to all speech, monitoring for the wake word to be spoken, which is primarily set up as "Alexa" (derived from Alexa Internet, the Amazon-owned Internet indexing company). Echo's microphones can be manually disabled by pressing a mute button to turn off the audio processing circuit.^[3]

Echo devices require a wireless Internet connection in order to work. Echo's voice recognition capability is based on Amazon Web Services and the voice platform Amazon acquired from Yap,^[10] Evi, and IVONA^[11] (a Polish-based specialist in voice technologies used in the Kindle Fire).^[12]

The smart speakers perform well with a 'good' (low-latency) Internet connection which minimizes processing time due to minimal communication round trips, streamable responses and geo-distributed service endpoints. While the application is free, an Amazon account is required, and setup is not possible without one.

Available services

Echo device offers weather from AccuWeather and news from a variety of sources, including local radio stations, iHeartRadio, BBC, NPR, and ESPN from TuneIn.^[13] Echo can play music

from the owner's Amazon Music accounts^[14] and has built-in support for the Pandora and Spotify streaming music services^[15] and has support for IFTTT and Nest thermostats.^[16] Echo can also play music from streaming services such as Apple Music, and Google Play Music from a phone or tablet. Echo maintains voice-controlled alarms, timers, shopping and to-do lists and can access Wikipedia articles. Echo will respond to your questions about items in your Google calendar. It also integrates with Yonomi,^[17] Philips Hue, Belkin Wemo, SmartThings, Insteon, and Wink.^{[18][19]} Additionally, integration with the Echo is in the works for Countertop by Orange Chef, Sonos,^[20] Scout Alarm, Garageio, Toymail, MARA, and Mojio.^[21] Questions like "Who is Kim Kardashian?" are answered by reading the first few lines of the corresponding Wikipedia article.^[22] It does not appear to be capable of playing music streamed from a local UPnP/DLNA media server.

Echo devices also have access to 'skills' built with the Alexa Skills Kit. These are third-party-developed voice experiences that add to the capabilities of any Alexa-enabled device (such as the Echo). Examples of skills include the ability to play music, answer general questions, set an alarm, order a pizza, get an Uber, and more. Skills are continuously being added to increase the capabilities available to the user. The Alexa Skills Kit is a collection of self-service APIs, tools, documentation and code samples that make it fast and easy for any developer to add skills to Alexa. Developers can also use the "Smart Home Skill API",^[23] a new addition to the Alexa Skills Kit, to easily teach Alexa how to control cloud-controlled lighting and thermostat devices. All of the code runs in the cloud – nothing is on any user device. A developer can follow tutorials to learn how to quickly build voice experiences for their new and existing applications.^[24]