



# Amazon Echo changes terms of voice usage

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**Amazon Echo** is a series of client devices for the **Amazon Alexa** voice control platform for connected smart homes. Echo products have long offered the option to disable cloud voice analysis and perform processing on-device, in addition to a separate option that theoretically prevents the company from saving voice recordings. However, in March of 2025, the company sent an email to users with this option on that disables the first option and only leaves the second, [citing the need to train generative AI](#).<sup>[1]</sup>

## Background [ edit | edit source ]

Alexa as a service is based around an edge client + cloud service model where a physical device acts as a conduit between voice and the cloud. This raises substantial privacy concerns as it is, because the lack of open source means that no one actually knows whether privacy settings are respected. However, much like Apple, Amazon assured customers through its settings interface that enabling the "Do Not Send Voice Recordings" setting would utilize exclusively local processing, sending your data to the cloud only "for features that require the transmission of audio, such as when you make a call or send a message or announcement via Alexa."<sup>[2]</sup> Local processing was available as a server on the Echo (4th Gen), Echo Show 10, and Echo Show 15, and could be utilized by lower power or older devices as clients.<sup>[2]</sup>

From archival analysis of the [Alexa FAQ](#) page, it can be estimated that this feature was introduced in early to mid 2022, given the first available archived copy of the page was in September 2022. As of writing, this page still includes this feature despite its imminent removal.<sup>[3]</sup> This likely means that the Echo (4th Gen) was not launched with this feature, as it was launched 10/22/2020<sup>[4]</sup> with the Echo Show 10 following not long after on 2/25/2021.<sup>[5]</sup> However, the Echo Show 15 (2023) and Echo Show 15 (2024) were both launched since, as implied by their names, and even the former was announced after this feature was unveiled.<sup>[6]</sup>

## Removal of the Do Not Send Voice Feature [ edit | edit source ]

On March 14, 2025 (unknown if this notice rolled out over multiple days), Amazon sent an email with the subject "Upcoming change to your Alexa Settings" to customers which had enabled the Do Not Send Voice feature. The email cites coming improvements to Alexa, including the addition of generative AI features. No alternative is given other than the already-existing "Don't save recordings" feature, which merely prohibits Amazon from keeping copies of the recordings.

Amazon claims in the email that "[t]he Alexa experience is designed to protect your privacy and keep your data secure." However, they do not appear to elaborate on this further than redirecting customers to the Alexa Privacy Hub, which cites features like the microphone toggle button and the ability to go

Dear Echo Customer,

We are reaching out to let you know that the Alexa feature 'Do Not Send Voice Recordings' that you enabled on your supported Echo device(s) will no longer be available beginning March 28th, 2025. This feature allowed compatible Echo devices to process the audio of Alexa requests locally on device. As we continue to expand Alexa's capabilities with generative AI features that rely on the processing power of Amazon's secure cloud, we have decided to no longer support this feature.

If you do not take action, your Alexa Settings will automatically be updated to 'Don't save recordings.' This means that, starting on March 28th, your voice recordings will be sent to and processed in the cloud, and they will be deleted after Alexa processes your requests. Any previously saved voice recordings will also be deleted. If your voice recordings setting is updated to 'Don't save recordings,' voice ID will not work and you will not be able to create a voice ID for individual users to access more personalized features. If you do not want to set your voice recordings setting to 'Don't save recordings,' please follow these steps before March 28th:

1. Open the Alexa App on your Mobile Phone
2. Go to Settings > Device Settings and select the device where this feature is enabled
3. Select 'Do Not Send Voice Recordings' from the menu
4. Disable the setting

The Alexa experience is designed to protect your privacy and keep your data secure, and that's not changing. Alexa voice requests are always encrypted in transit to Amazon's secure cloud, which was designed with layers of security protections to keep customer information safe. Customers can continue to choose from a robust set of controls by visiting the Alexa Privacy dashboard online or navigating to More > Alexa Privacy in the Alexa app. Learn more about these features and how we're keeping your information secure at the Alexa Privacy Hub: <https://www.amazon.com/alexaprivacyhub>.

If you have any questions, please contact our customer service team: <https://www.amazon.com/hz/contact-us/foresight/hubgateway>.

back through already saved recordings and delete them.<sup>[7]</sup>

It is worth noting that other companies like Apple that admit to sending some voice/speech data for processing at least claim to use confidential computing (read more on Wikipedia) techniques like Private Cloud Compute<sup>[8]</sup>. While these are not fully open-source solutions, these privacy-preserving technologies are audited externally and claim to be inaccessible to employees. Amazon has, in the past, admitted some recordings "undergo anonymized human review,<sup>[8]</sup>" so it is evident these recordings are not fully autonomously processed in such a way.

## Consumer response [[edit](#) | [edit source](#)]

The response to this issue has been varied—some consumers, such as many in [this Reddit thread](#)<sup>[9]</sup>, are quite displeased with the removal of the feature, with comments like "Great opportunity to discontinue Amazon Alexa!" and "We will spy on you and you will like it." However, media outlets have circulated a claim by Amazon that only 0.03% of users used the feature,<sup>[1][9]</sup> so it is likely that this will go broadly unnoticed whether it is positive or negative.

## References [[edit](#) | [edit source](#)]

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