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| **Intelligent Personal Assistant** | **Notable Skills** | **Faults/Flaws** |
| Apple Siri | * Easy to access on Apple devices. Understands natural human language. * Knowledgeable about news, weather, sports, movies, directions, and local businesses. * Well-versed in what to watch on TV. Knows how to control some smart home appliances. | * Doesn’t know how to communicate with most other apps and services. * Not always as fast as some assistants. * Lack of an open API |
| Google Voice Search/Google Now | * Fast. Uncommonly accurate with directions. * Eerily adept at mining your personal data for flights, packages, reservations, and other useful info. * Has some capacity to speak with third-party apps for certain tasks, including notes, messages, and music playback. | * Attempts at proactivity can sometimes be a nuisance (e.g., sports scores for teams you don’t care about, directions home from familiar places). * No hands in the smart home business. Third-party app integrations seem to have stalled. |
| Amazon Alexa | * Streams music and reads news from multiple sources. * Provides weather, traffic, and other info, and controls a growing number of smart home devices. * Allows voice purchases for Amazon Prime items and even lets you order a pizza. * Open API lets any app or service tie into it. | * Housebound with no smartphone integration. May make you wonder if you’re nothing but a receptacle for Amazon goods and services. |
| Microsoft Cortana | * Handles reminders and calendar appointments, tracks packages, sets alarms, and taps into Bing for sports, weather, and other information. * Hooks into some Windows apps, and has recently started talking to other bots in Skype. | * Feels most at home on Windows, the platform that app developers–and, arguably, users–care the least about. * Has fewer capabilities and is harder to access on iOS and Android. |
| Facebook M | * Attempts to do anything you might ask it to do. | * Doesn’t actually exist as a consumer product, and is a long way from getting there. Only a small number of people in San Francisco have access. |
| Soundhound Hound | * Impressive understanding of complex requests such as “Show me coffee shops within five miles that aren’t Starbucks.” Ties into some third-party services such as Yelp, Uber, and Expedia. | * Connections to third-party apps are limited, and no shortcut exists to open the app on iOS and Android. |
| Viv | * Can interpret complex questions such as “Will it be warmer than 70 degrees near the Golden Gate Bridge after 5 p.m. the day after tomorrow?”. * Tie-ins with third-party apps like Venmo are in the works. | * Little proof that it actually functions as advertised outside of prepared demos. |
| Ozlo | * Finds and internalizes data from multiple sources such as Yelp and Foursquare, pulling it all into slick informational cards. * Tries to be conversational by offering and understanding follow-up questions, such as “which ones are open now?” and “what’s on the menu?” | * Limited utility, at least until Ozlo’s makers start adding more capabilities. * Heavy reliance on users to train the AI. |
| X.AI | * Knows your schedule and preferences, handles the legwork of corresponding with other parties. | * Relies heavily on humans to verify the vast majority of calendar data from emails that the virtual assistant, “Amy,” generates, according to Bloomberg. |
| SpeakToIt Assistant.AI | * Little to speak of beyond Siri, but it can learn custom voice commands to activate its existing list of skills. | * Not as useful as the virtual assistant your phone comes with, and not as easily accessible. |