Alexa – your new coworker?

OC MeetUp Munich 09.01.2018

Tomasz Krajewski

Agenda

1. Short Introduction
2. How to Write a Skill
3. Let‘s Try it out Yourself!

VUI - Voice User Interface

- VUI ~ GUI

- Input: Voice
- Output: Voice

- A well known example:

  A Hotline

Today

- 3 tech giants fight crucial battle over voice recognition

What about Microsoft?

Are voice Chatbots new Apps? Don’t you believe?

- There is no possibilty that this device will feel more comfortable to the executive than the keyboard. Because of its ‘rollability‘, the mause has the aura of a gimmick
  - COMPUTERWORLD, 10/1983
- “mice are nice ideas, but of dubious value for business users.“
  - PC WEEK, 04/1984

TODO List

Today (yesterday?)

1. Take your smartphone
2. Unlock it
3. Find the right app
4. Go to tab todo list
5. Press add a new task
6. Type a name
7. Press save button
8. Put your smartphone away

Tomorrow? (today?)

1. Be in the room where Alexa is
2. Alexa, add „prepare my presentation for Alexa event on Tuesday 11.02.2018 and add it to my outlook calendar“
3. Done

Alexa for business

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ViB3XhsTLuo

Webinar: Building Skills with Alexa for Business

You can register now and save the date Tuesday, January 16, 20189 AM-10 AM PT. There is a special webinar by Amazon about new alexa features

http://dev.amazonappservices.com/alexa-for-business-web-reg.html

What is Alexa?

amazon alexa

Cloud-based intelligence

Automated Speech-Recognition (ASR)

Natural Language Procession (NLU)

THE ALEXA ECOSYSTEM

Supported by two powerful frameworks

ALEXA SKILLS KIT

Create Great Content:

ASK is how you connect to your consumer

Lives In The Cloud

Automated Speech Recognition (ASR)

Natural Language Understanding (NLU)

Always Learning

ALEXA VOICE SERVICE

Unparalleled Distribution:

AVS allows your content to be everywhere

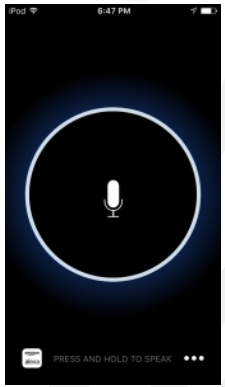
amazon echo

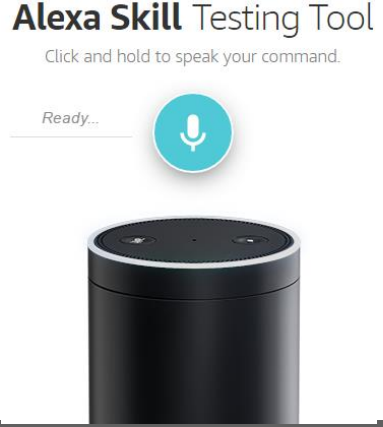
amazon fireTV

UNDER THE HOOD OF ASK

A closer look at how the Alexa Skills Kit process
a request and returns an appropriate response

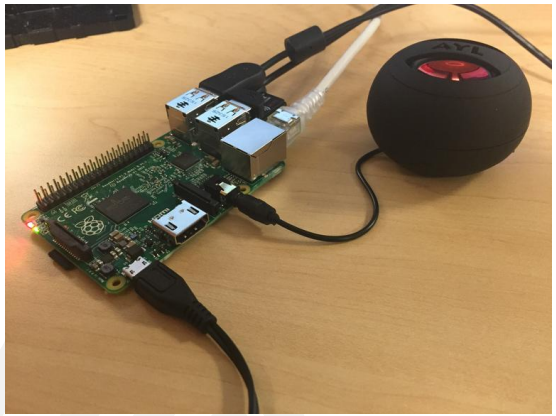
Meet the Alexa Family

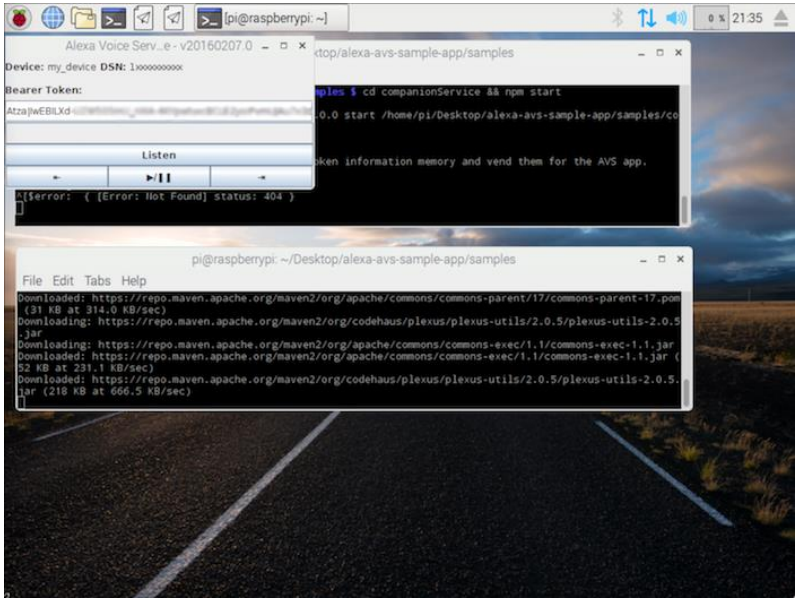




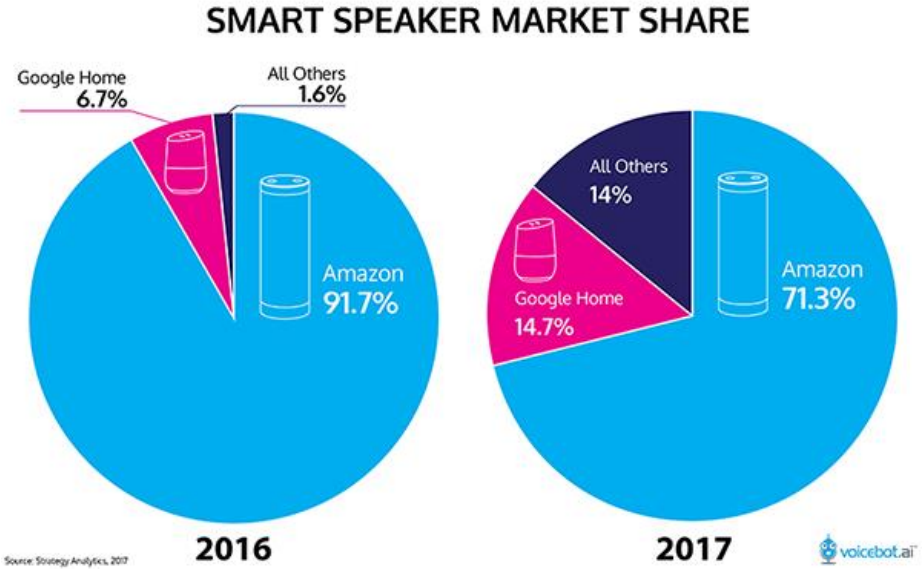
Alexa with Raspberry Pi

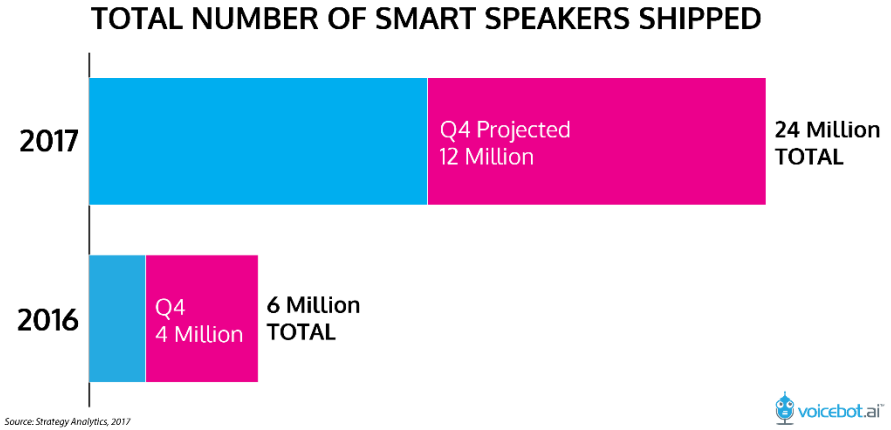
- https://github.com/alexa/alexa-avs-sample-app
- https://github.com/alexa-pi/AlexaPi

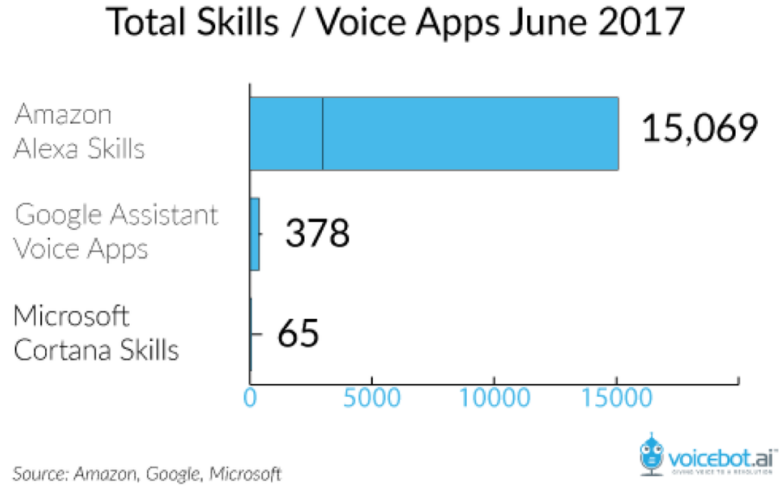




Market

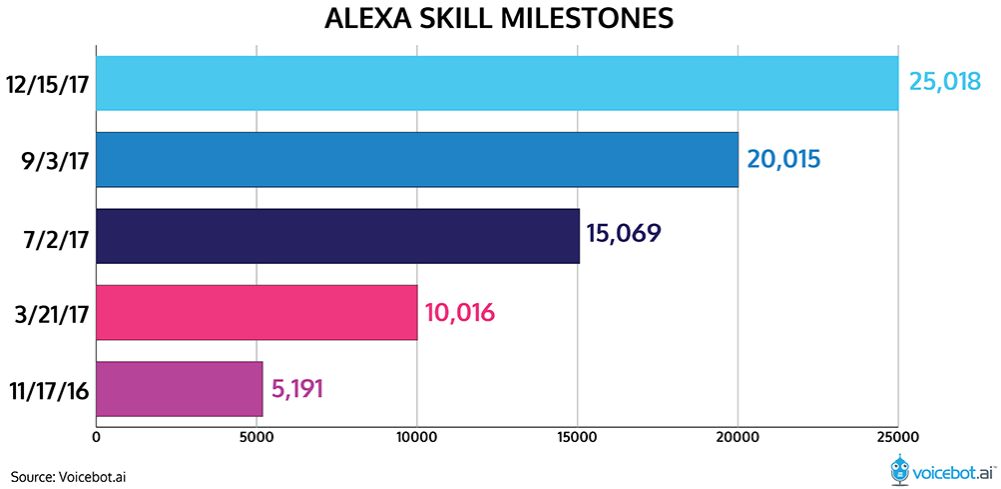


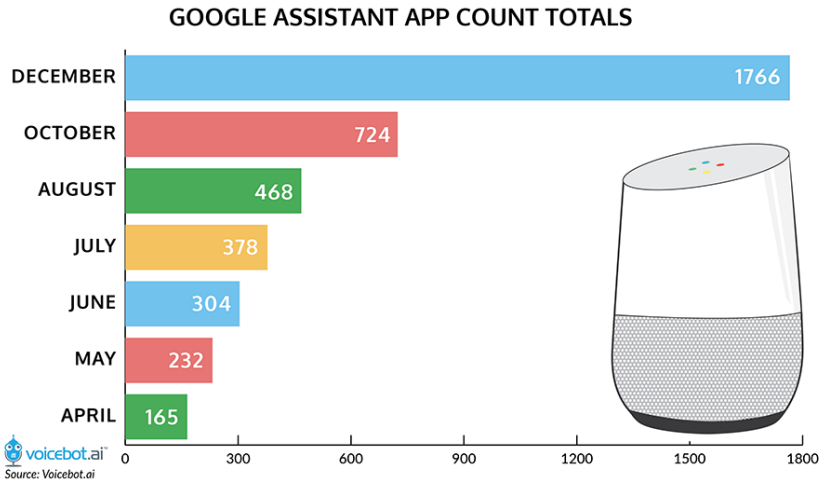




Source: https://www.voicebot.ai/amazon-echo-alexa-stats/

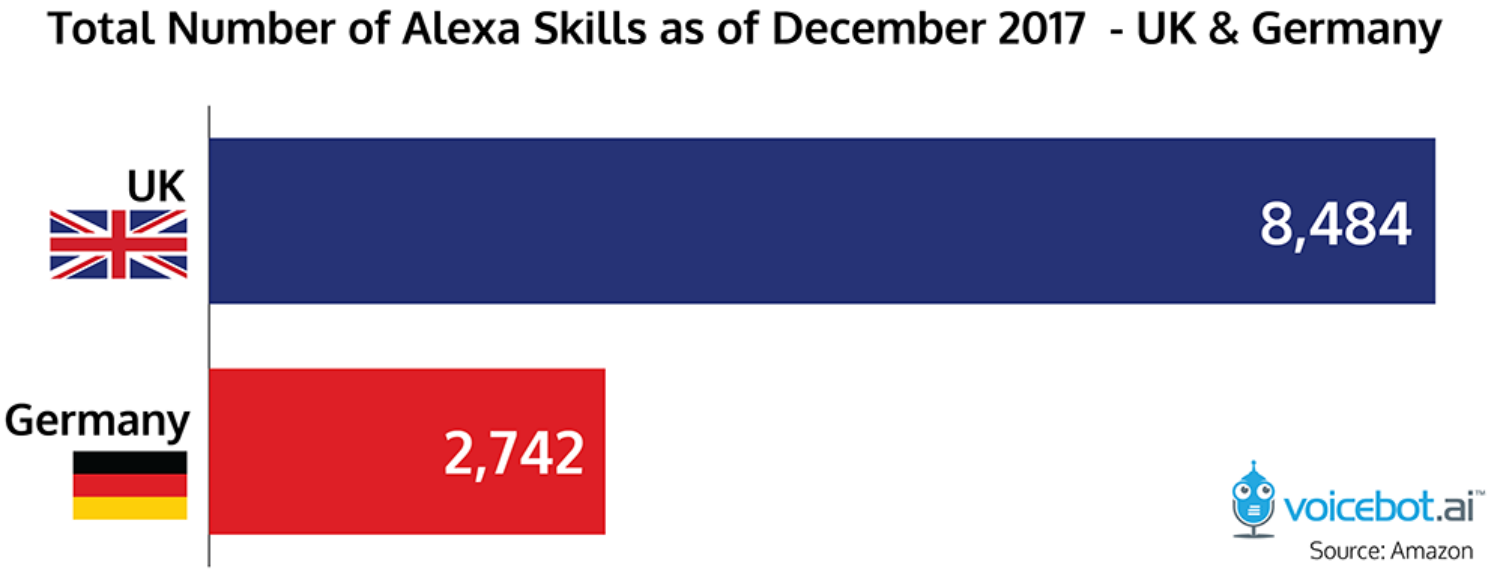
Alexa vs Google Home Skills fight in the USA market (December 2017)





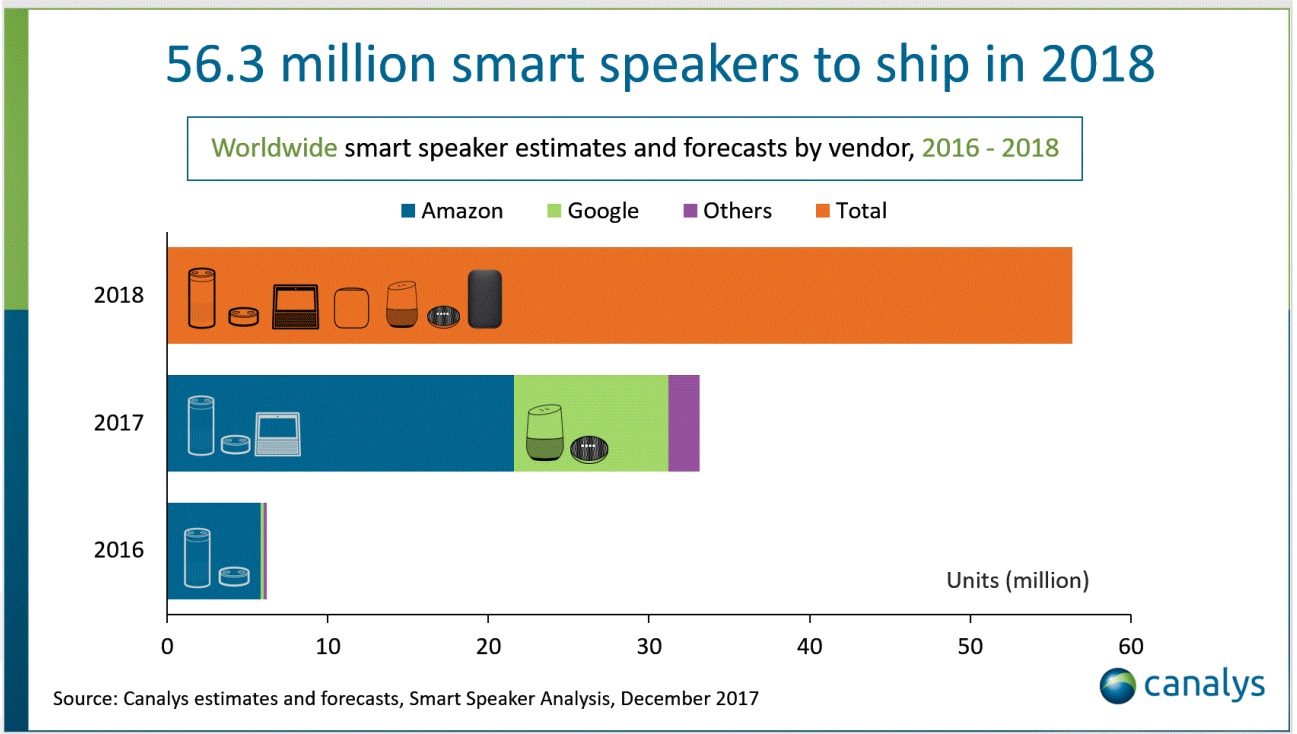
Source: https://www.voicebot.ai/

What about German or UK market?



Source: https://www.voicebot.ai/

56 Million Smart Speaker Sales in 2018 Says Canalys



Source: https://www.voicebot.ai/

Arizton: Smart Speaker Market $4.8 Billion in 2022

- Chicago-based research firm Arizton has a new report revealing that the smart speaker market was $991 million in 2016 and will grow to $4.8 billion in 2022

Source: https://www.voicebot.ai/

How to write an Amazon skill?

What technology can I use?

- Theoretical any programming language
- My recommendations
  - Python (python with flask-ask https://github.com/johnwheeler/flask-ask and https://www.pythonanywhere.com)
  - Node.js (javascript and heroku.com)
  - AWS? Yes but not always

  - Pro: https://developer.amazon.com/de/alexa-skills-kit/alexa-aws-credits
  - Pro: free tier, which offers one million AWS Lambda requests and up to 750 hours of Amazon EC2 compute time per month at no cost

Development Setup @ Amazon

2 Accounts at Amazon. You need to add your Credit Card for Amazon Web Services account!!

You can use our Alexa template for developing skills at AWS. Just follow 3 short steps from my repository.
https://github.com/falent/Alexa_universal_skill_template_VM/tree/master/dist/app/src

Alexa Skills Kit

AWS Lambda

[Other Services]

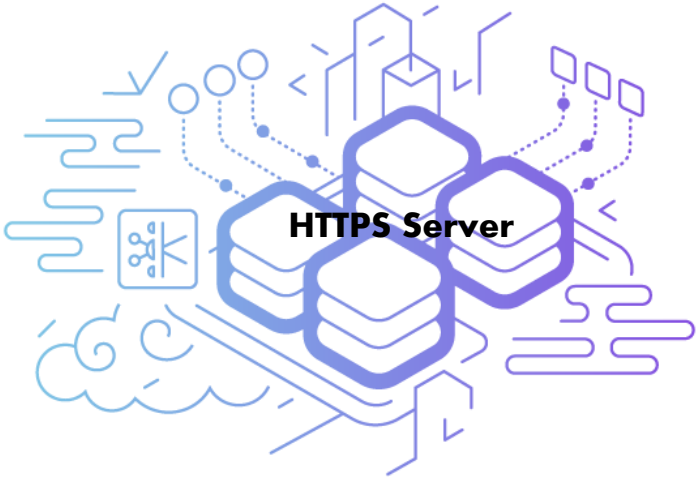
S3

AWS DynamoDB

Response (Text, Audio Stream, Card...)

Development Setup @ HTTPS server

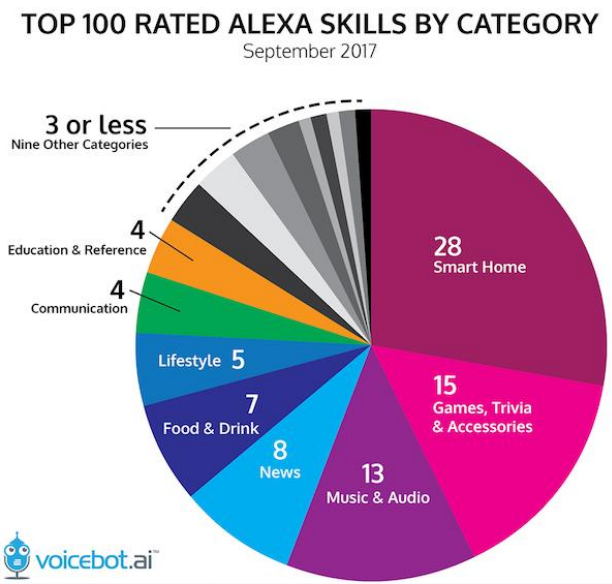
Amazon Developer Account and your own https server (any public node.js provoder, like Heroku).



Basics

Skills

- Skills are built in capabilities for Alexa to give new customer experiences.
- You can treat it as a normal program or a script
- Find skills for your Alexa https://www.amazon.de/b?node=10068460031



Get your Alexa dot for free!

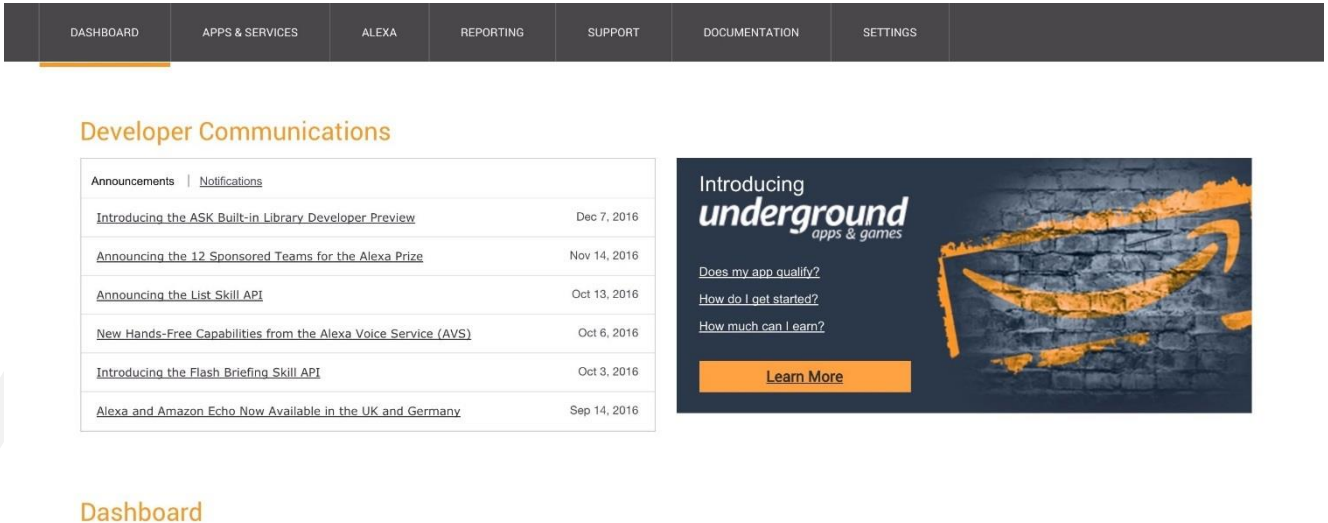
Build a simple skill :)

- https://developer.amazon.com/de/a-skills-kit/alexa-developer-skill-promotion

Let’s configure your new skill!

Go to Amazon Developer Portal

- 1. Let's go to https://developer.amazon.com/ and create a new account (you can use your current amazon account. Amazon developer portal is for free). Once you're in, you should see something that looks like this:

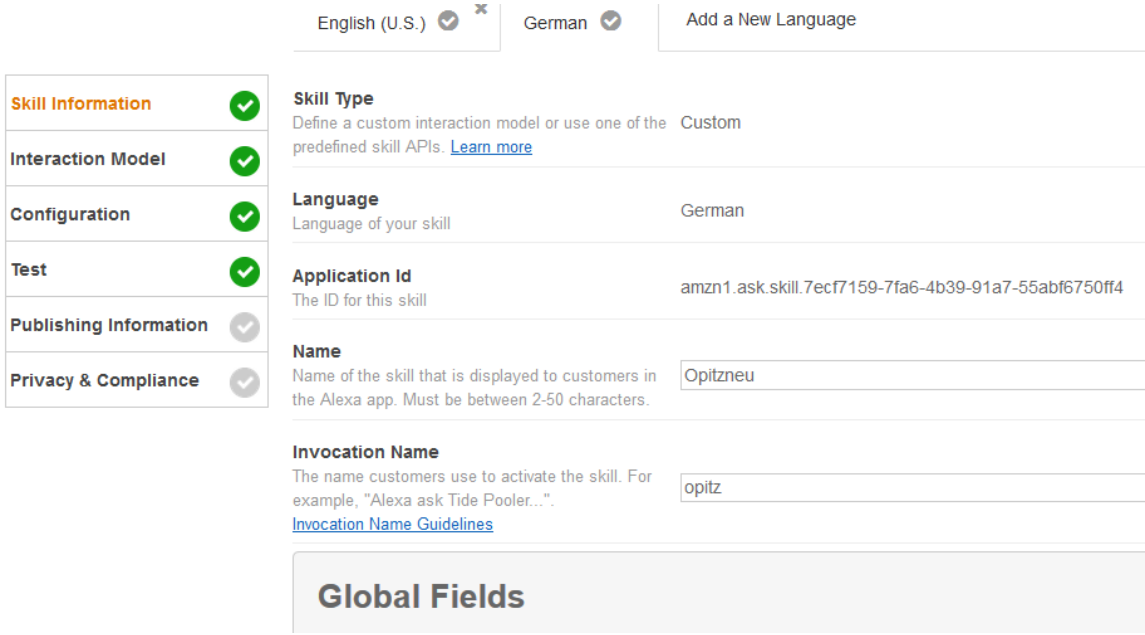


- 2. Click “Alexa” at the top and then click Alexa Skills Kit.

Dashboard

- Click “Add a New Skill” on the right and we'll go ahead and start creating our new skill.
- Add name skill and invocation name.

  It should be unique and easy to say.



Invocation Name

- With invocation name, Alexa identifies what the user wants to do. You can use a such sentence to start your skill **Alexa, ask <your skill invocation name>**. In our case it is:

  “Alexa, **ask Opitz**“ or…

  “Alexa, **start Opitz**” or…

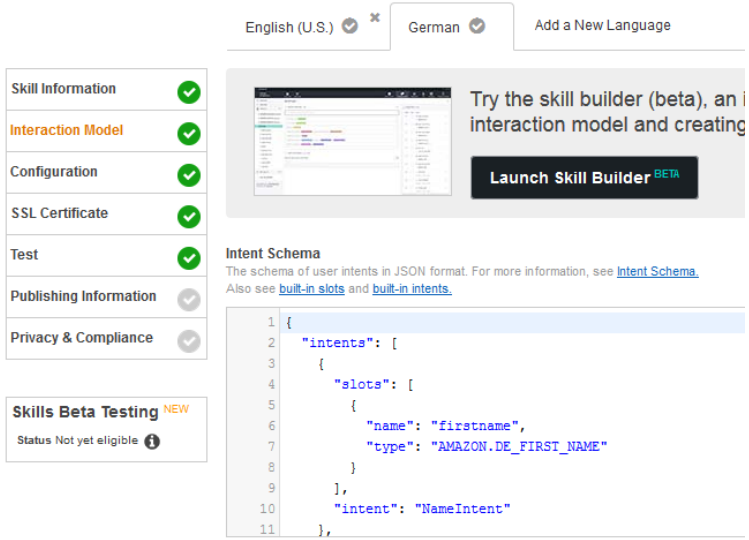
  “Alexa, **begin Opitz**” or…

- Click “next“ in the developer portal and go to interaction Model

Interaction Model: Intents

- You can imagine Intent like a trigger function for your code.
- For example, NameIntent is responsible for getting a name from the user. If you want to get some data from the user you need slots.
- Of course you can have intents which have no slots or many of them

Lets see some examples



Interaction Model: Built-in Intents

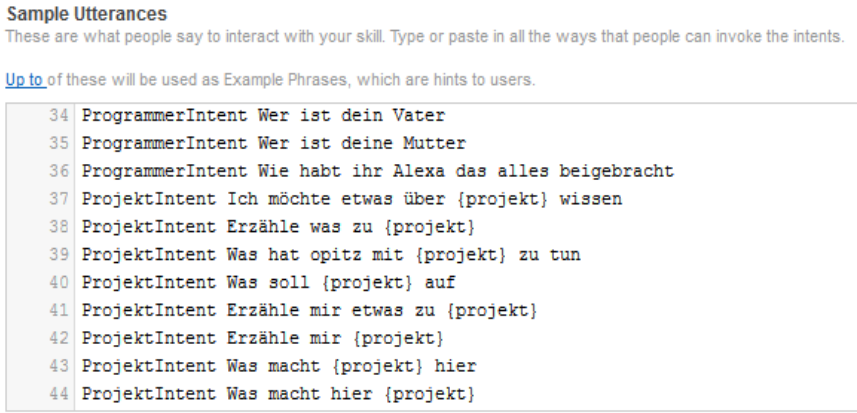
- There are also built-in intents like AMAZON.YesIntent or AMAZON.HelpIntent. They were designed to react to most used cases like: “Alexa, stop” (AMAZON.YesIntent)! Built-in intents already have utterances (user sentences) assigned to them. We can map more utterances to these built-in intents as necessary.
- Please remember built-in intents must be included into Interaction model if you want to use them! You don’t need to define special utterance, but of course you can do it. For example if you want that your user close your skill, add:

  “AMAZON.StopIntent I dont want to talk with you any more

- More: https://developer.amazon.com/de/docs/custom-skills/standard-built-in-intents.html

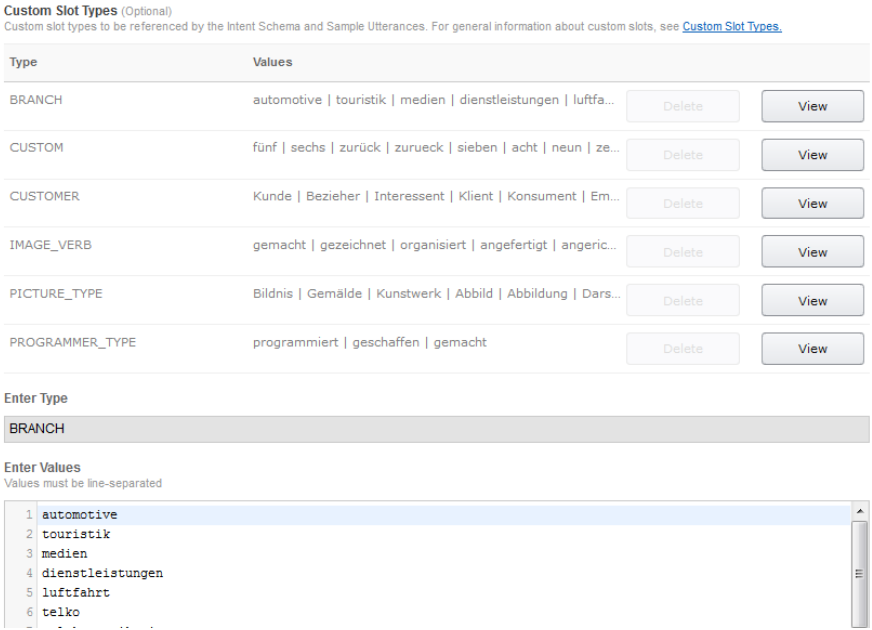
Interaction Model: Utterances

- We need to set sample of utterances (your questions, answers) to improve accurancy of Alexa. Some utterances might include:
- ProjectIntent Tell me something about project?
- ProjectIntent Tell me about **{projekt}**
- What is strange value **{projekt}** ? It is a slot value which is like a variable that it has a specific value after we add plenty of similar meanings.



Interaction Model: Custom Slots

- A custom slot is like a variable. It can be asked by different words defined by you
- Tell me about your **{projectType}** project done for **{customer}**
- **{projectType}** can be: IoT, Big Data etc
- **{customer} can be** Lufthansa, GEMA etc



Interaction Model: Build-in Slot Types

- Alexa supports several slot types that define how data in the slot is recognized and handled. The provided types fall into the following general categories: Numbers, Dates, and Times lists of Items
- F.e: AMAZON.DATE Converts words that indicate dates (“today”, “tomorrow”, or “july”) into a date format (such as “2015-07-00T9”).
- AMAZON.DE_FIRST_NAME so you don’t need define any custom slots values for users names

Intent Schema

The schema of user intents in JSON format. For more information, see Intent Schema.
Also see built-in slots and built-in intents.

```
79    {
80      "slots": [
81        {
82          "name": "firstname",
83          "type": "AMAZON.DE_FIRST_NAME"
84        }
85      ],
86      "intent": "MyNameIsIntent"
87    },
```

More:
https://developer.amazon.com/de/docs/custom-skills/slot-type-reference.html

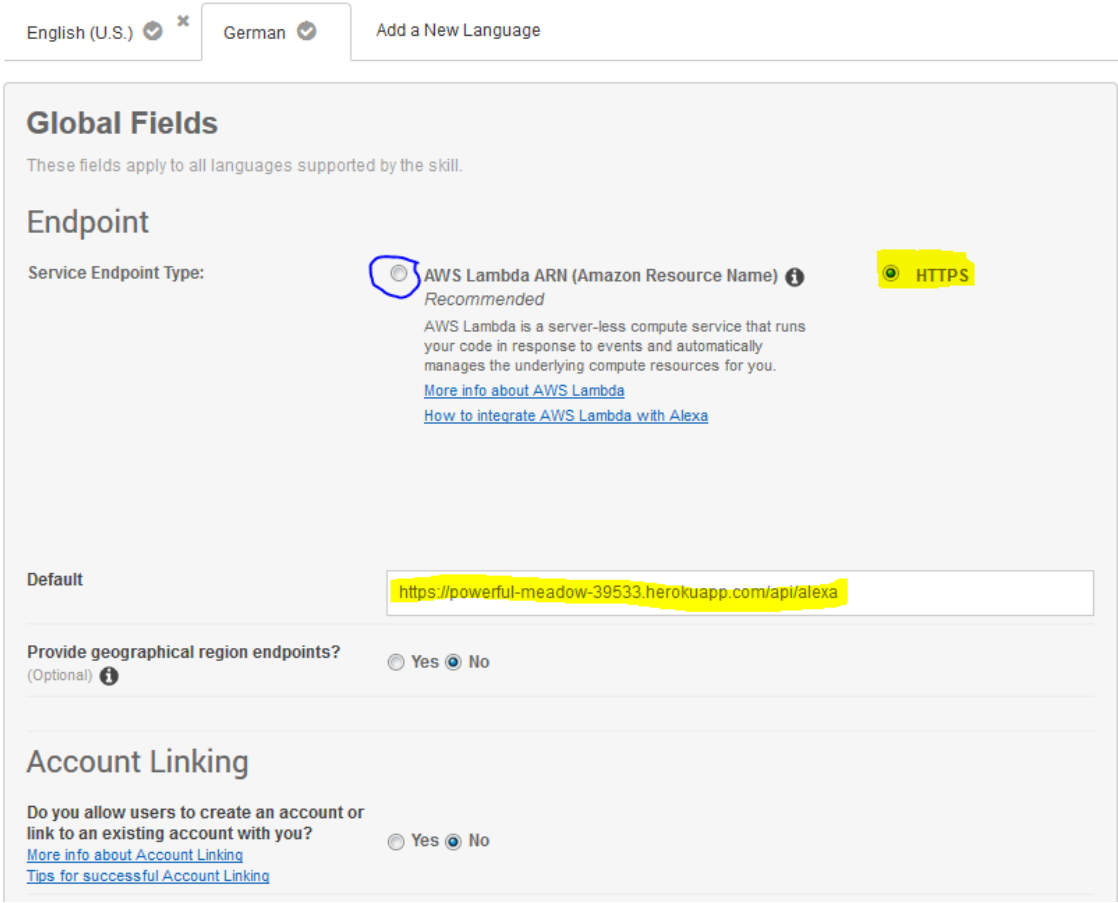
The Whole Interaction Model

- You can find it in the templates in VM I prepared. Folder speech_assets
- Please visit our opitz git repository https://git.opitz-consulting.de/projects/ALEXAWIM where you can find lots of extended interactions models

Alexa without interaction model is...

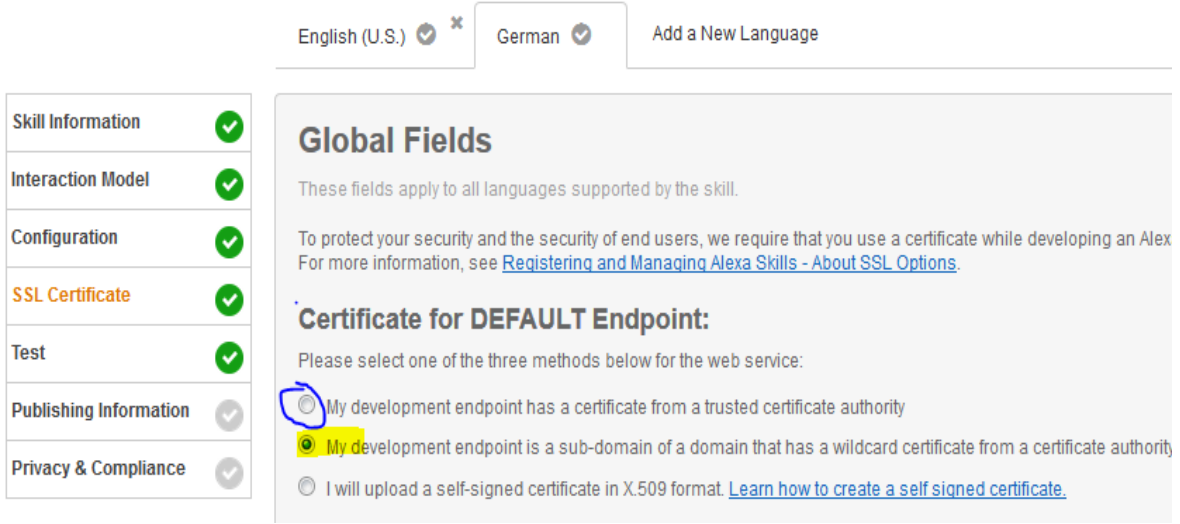
Skill Configuration

- Let's go back to the amazon developer portal, our skill configuration section
- We will program skill locally. That is the reason we need to choose Endpoint as HTTPS (our skill code is almost the same for AWS Lambda function)



Last Step… SSL Certificate

- For HTTPS endpoint, choose the second option (yellow marked)
- For AWS endpoint, the blue one



Node.js with Alexa

Beginner Tutorial

Build an Alexa Skill in Node.JS

Before We Start

- Be sure you have downloaded a right VM image:

https://github.com/falent/Alexa_universal_skill_template_VM

or copy it from my USB Stick.

1. Open https://www.npmjs.com/package/alexa-sdk Alexa SDK Documentation. It helps you a lot later ☺

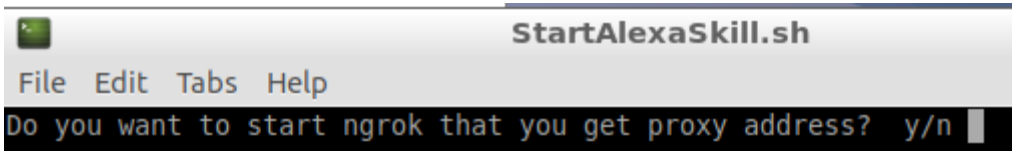
2. Start Alexa OC Virtual Machine

3. Open eclipse or atom. The templates has been already included in the VM Desktop Directory: „Template“

Virtual Machine

Test Your Skill Locally (VM 1)

1. After you start my VM. My script will show up with a question:



We need to start ngrok if we want to test our skill locally. Please type **y**

2. „Do you want to updated script from Tomasz's GitHub" Please answer only once **y** , my script will update template code from my github

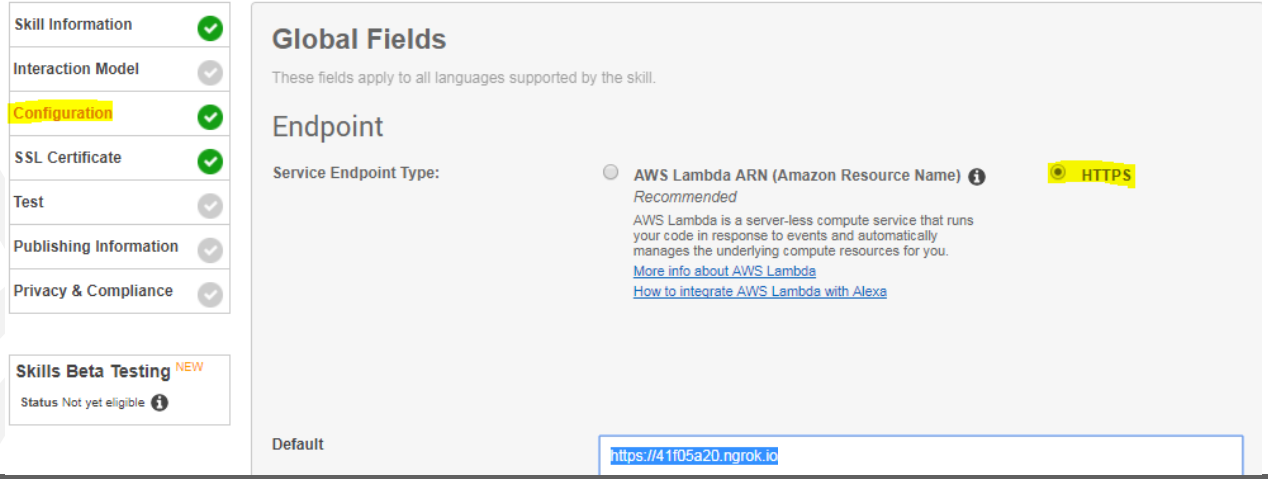
3. Please copy the last line you get from the script terminal. It is your endpoint url. In my case was: https://0031f3d4.ngrok.io **your will be different but in this convention!**

4. **Your skill is ready to use. Please keep the tab opened the whole time.**

Test Your Skill Locally (VM 2)

5. Go to amazon developer portal and click edit in your skill
   https://developer.amazon.com/edw/home.html#/skills

6. Click configuration in your skill and put your individual https Endpoint (from step nr 3. Your address should look similar to mine)
   https://41f05a20.ngrok.io/

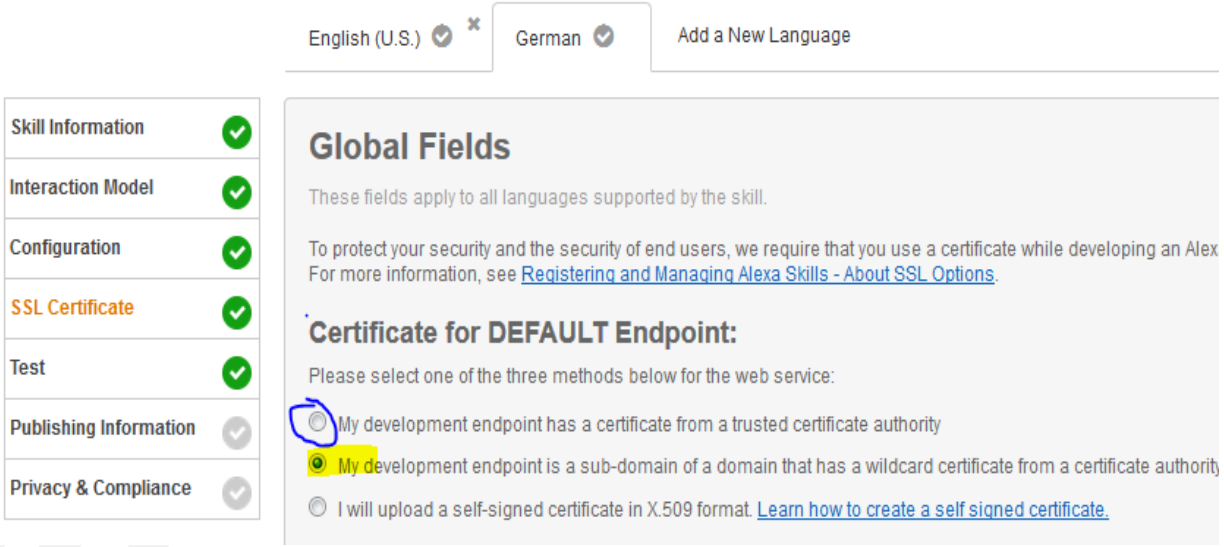


Test Your Skill Locally (VM 3)

7. Save your configuration and in the next step choose second option

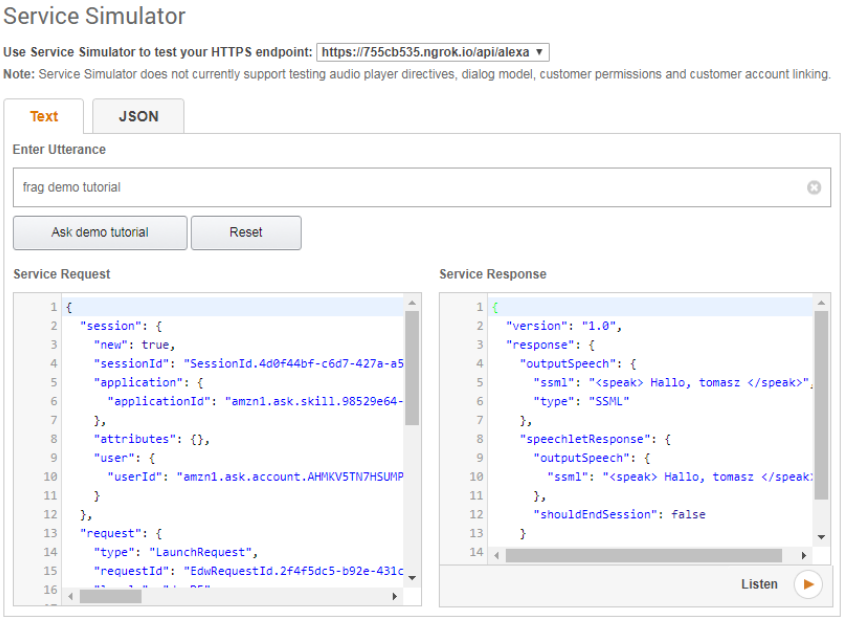
   My development endpoint is a sub-domain of a domain that has a wildcard certificate from a certificate authority

   Click next.



Test Your Skill Locally (VM 4)

8. You can test your skill in service Simulator. You should see Service Response on the right



You can also use Docker

Please follow instructions in readMe file:
https://github.com/falent/Alexa_universal_skill_template

Set Entry Point (this example is for AWS)

```
const Alexa = require('alexa-sdk');
const SpeechOutput = require('./alexa/resources/speech-output');
const newSessionHandlers = require('./alexa/handlers/newSession.handlers');
const templateHandlers = require('./alexa/handlers/template.handlers');

        exports.handler = function(event, context, callback) {
            const alexa = Alexa.handler(event, context, callback);
            alexa.resources = SpeechOutput;  //your multilanguage speach output file
            alexa.registerHandlers(
              newSessionHandlers,
              templateHandlers //your handlers
            );
            alexa.execute();
        };
```

Please compare it to HTTP solution:
https://github.com/falent/Alexa_universal_skill_template/blob/master/dist/app/src/index.js What are differences?

Example Conversation for us

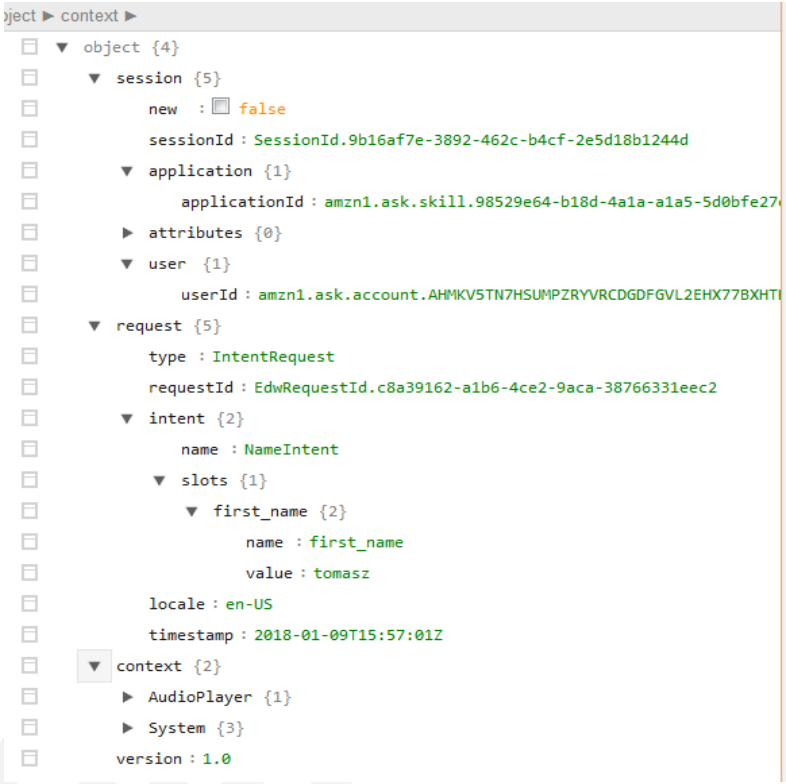
Alexa: „What is your name?“

Me: „Tomasz“

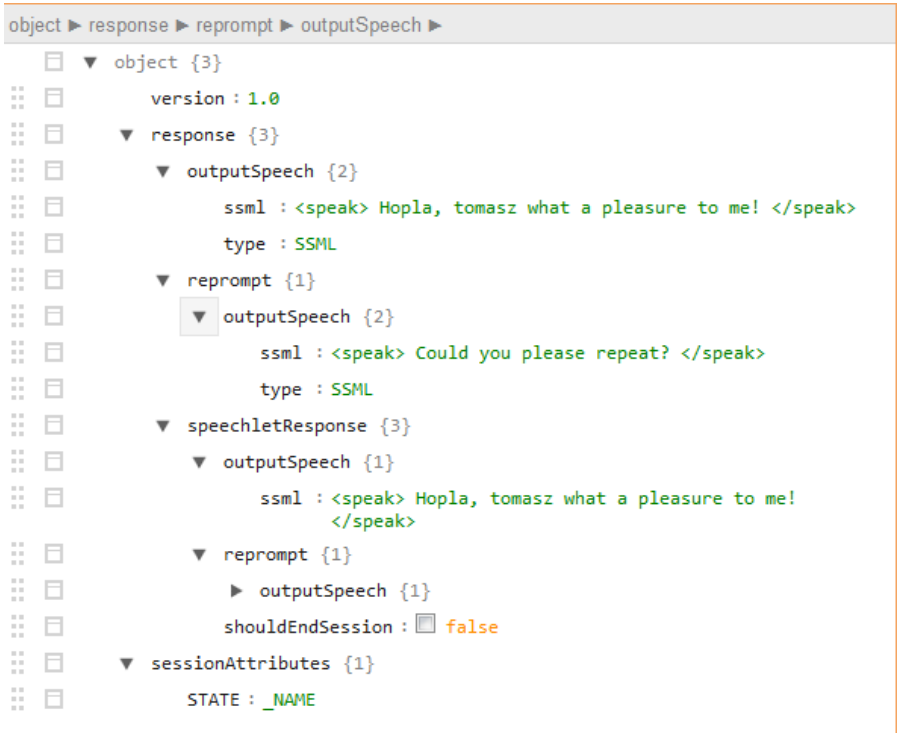
Alexa: „Hopla, what a pleasure Tomasz“

Example Conversation for Alexa

Service Request (Tomasz)



Service Response (Alexa)

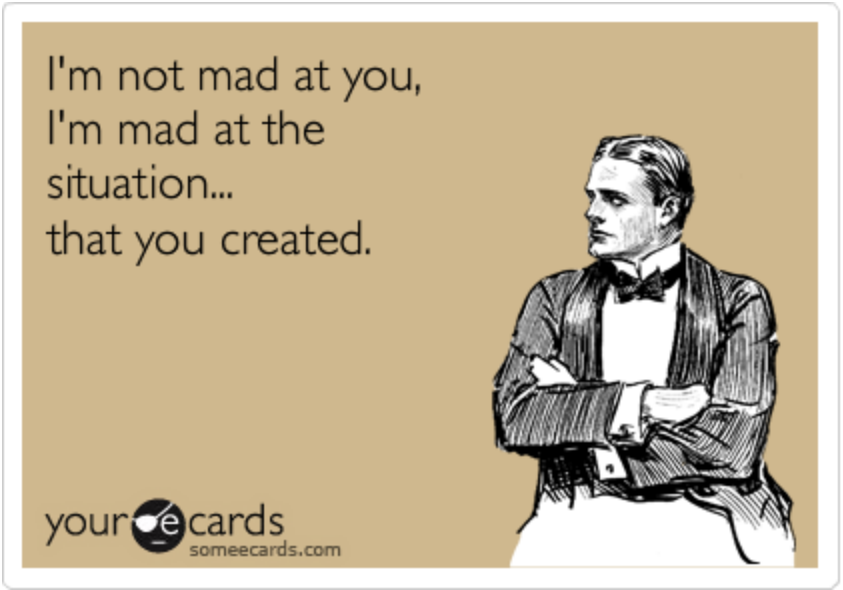


Custom Intents. Tell what you want and end!

```
'CustomIntent': function() {

    this.response.speak("Im not mad at you, Im mad at the situation... that you created!!!");
    this.emit(':responseReady');


},
```



Custom Intents. Tell and expect somethig from my user!

```
'CustomIntent': function() {

    this.response.speak("Im not mad at you, Im mad at the situation... that you created!!!")
    .listen('So you want to talk to me now after you ignored me...');
    this.emit(':responseReady');


},
```

Custom Intents. Tell and expect somethig from my user! Show him what you have as a card!

```
'CustomIntent': function() {

    this.response.speak("Im not mad at you, Im mad at the situation... that you created!!!")
    .listen('So you want to talk to me now after you ignored me...')
    .cardRenderer("cardTitle", "cardContent", "https://photopath.jpg need follow amazon rules");
    this.emit(':responseReady');


},
```

More more more examples.... In a short alexa bible ;)

Persisting Skill Attributes through DynamoDB

https://www.npmjs.com/package/alexa-sdk

Device Address Service

Adding Multi-Language Support for Skill

Playback Controller Interface

Skill State Management

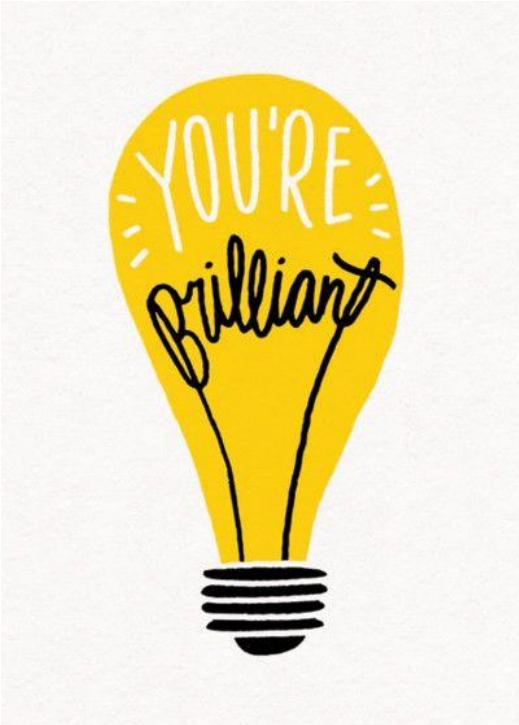
Speech Synthesis Markup Language

https://developer.amazon.com/de/docs/custom-skills/speech-synthesis-markup-language-ssml-reference.html#amazon-effect

```
<speak>
    I want to tell you a secret.
    <amazon:effect name="whispered">I am not a real human.</amazon:effect>.
    Can you believe it?
</speak>
```

```
<speak>
    Welcome to Car-Fu.
    <audio src="https://carfu.com/audio/carfu-welcome.mp3" />
    You can order a ride, or request a fare estimate.
    Which will it be?
</speak>
```

Congratulation, let‘s start to go step by step through my sample code!



Please clone First Example

https://github.com/falent/Alexa_Event_Exercises

And lets code together :)

API with Alexa Exercise (1)

You know how to program Alexa or at least you can use my template

I prepared for you a simple API REST Server. Imagine you need to read temperature from a given conference room using alexa (1 Intent) and try to change temperature in that room. Your user need to tell alexa this value

You will program in 2 person team. Every time will get one virtual conference room with id

API with Alexa Exercise (2) GET

Example to read all values from your conference rooms

https://a049d2cb.ngrok.io/api/conferenceRoom/5a54016c5038c071a3efcd53

API with Alexa Exercise (2) PUT

Operation: PUT

Headers: Content-Type: application/json

Body: {

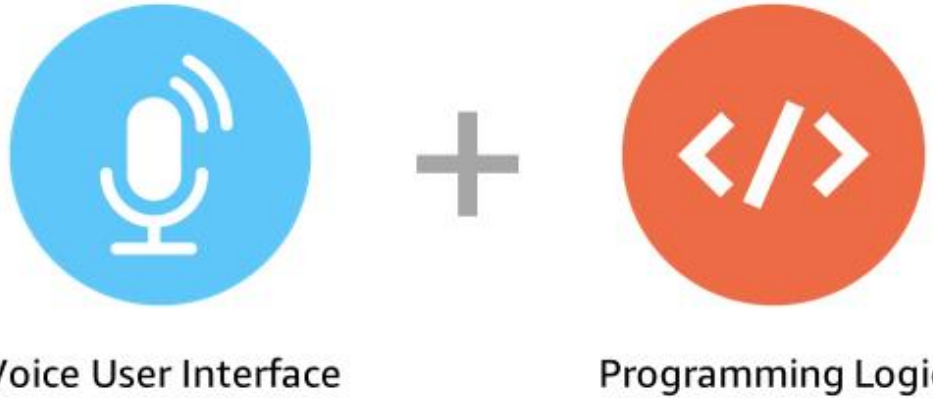
{"temperature": 10}

}

https://a049d2cb.ngrok.io/api/conferenceRoom/5a54016c5038c071a3efcd53

Please don‘t be quiet, coding session has been just started…

Creating an Alexa Skill



Some References for Skill Developing

1. https://www.npmjs.com/ - npm is the package manager for JavaScript and the world's largest software registry
2. https://github.com/alexa/alexa-cookbook - lots of examples how to build skills in Node.js
3. https://git.opitz-consulting.de/projects/ALEXAWIM - Christian Ochsenkühn and my work for Opitz
4. https://www.tutorialspoint.com/nodejs/ - Tutorial
5. https://developer.amazon.com/documentation - Official Alexa Doc
6. https://developer.amazon.com/de/alexa-skills-kit/tutorials - Official Amazon tutorials
7. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vsEaGjPPLqM - Youtube videos
8. https://www.codecademy.com/learn/learn-alexa-skills-kit - A complete "from the basics" intro to Alexa and Lambda

Deploying Your Skill to Heroku (1)

You can read about heroku: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Heroku

1. You need to register https://signup.heroku.com/ :)
2. Open terminal in your OC Alexa VM and go to your skill directory
   cd /home/alexa/Desktop/Template/Alexa_universal_skill_template_VM && heroku login
3. Enter your heroku credentials

```
alexa@alexa-VirtualBox:~$ cd /home/alexa/Desktop/TemplateHeroku && heroku login

Enter your Heroku credentials:
Email: krajewski1952@gmail.com
Password: ********
Logged in as krajewski1952@gmail.com
alexa@alexa-VirtualBox:~/Desktop/TemplateHeroku$
```

```
Be sure your project is fresh and ready :) rm -rf .git
```

Deploying Your Skill to Heroku (2)

4. Create a new heroku app. Please save your app name. I got “rocky-river-24493” you will get another random funny name

   cd /home/alexa/Desktop/TemplateHeroku && heroku apps:create --region eu

5. Init a new git app

   git init

6. Connect your app to heroku

   heroku git:remote –a <your app name from step 4>

5. Set app to dev

   heroku config:set NPM_CONFIG_PRODUCTION=false

6. Add files to git reposidory

   git add . && git commit -m "my first commit"

Deploying Your Skill to Heroku (3)

7. Push your files
   git push heroku master

8. Set your app to be a web app
   heroku ps:scale web=1

8. Create a mongoDB to your app. Go to page:
   https://elements.heroku.com/addons/mongolab

8. Click install and choose your app name from step 4.
   https://elements.heroku.com/addons/mongolab

9. Choose sandbox. It is free and you have around 500 MB capacity. Click provision

Deploying Your Skill to Heroku (4)

10. In your terminal in VM, get your heroku mongoDB address

    heroku config:get MONGODB_URI

11. Copy your mongodb and paste to your /home/alexa/Desktop/TemplateHeroku/dist/app/routes/alexa/models/user.js

    f.E
    mongodb://heroku_6b9rh667:f7bcbsgbkcildjoo22rd3vpmmr@ds133465.mlab.com:33465/heroku_6b9rh667

12. Add your changes in heroku and push it

    git add . && git commit -m "I added my personal Mongodb" && git push heroku master

Deploying Your Skill to Heroku (5)

13. Check if your app works

    heroku logs --tail

14. Put your heroku app address to your amazon developer Alexa configuration tab

    https://<your heroku app name>.herokuapp.com/

    In my case it is:

    https://rocky-river-24493.herokuapp.com/

Questions?

Thanks for your attention!

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