



Alexa Skills Kit and Alexa Voice Service Expand to the UK

September 14, 2016

Developers can now use the Alexa Skills Kit (ASK) to build new skills and capabilities for UK customers—thousands of UK developers are already building skills, including Daily Mail, EDF Energy, Hive, Jamie Oliver Media Group, Just Eat, Laundrapp, National Rail Enquiries, Radioplayer, Skyscanner, The Telegraph, TuneIn, Guardian, and Sky

Global developers are also building skills for customers in the UK including BMW, Fitbit, Honeywell, Nest, Netatmo, Osram LIGHTIFY, Philips Hue, SmartThings, Spotify, tado°, TP-Link, TuneIn, Uber, WeMo, and more

Starting early next year, hardware makers can integrate the Alexa Voice Service into their devices for UK Customers, for free

LUXEMBOURG—14th September, 2016—Today, Amazon announced the expansion of the [Alexa Skills Kit](#) (ASK) and the [Alexa Voice Service](#) (AVS), so that developers around the world can build voice experiences for Alexa customers in the UK.

“Since launching Alexa, tens of thousands of developers have started using the Alexa Skills Kit with over 3,000 third party skills available to customers today,” said Steve Rabuchin, Vice President, Alexa. “We’ve been amazed at the momentum and the innovative ways developers have created new capabilities on Alexa. We’re excited to see how the expansion to the UK will accelerate developer’s ability to create engaging voice-experiences for Alexa customers.”

Alexa Skills Kit (ASK)

Free, Self-Service APIs—No Experience with Speech Recognition Required

The Alexa Skills Kit (ASK) is a collection of free, self-service APIs and tools that make it fast and easy for developers to create new voice-driven capabilities for Alexa. With a few lines of code, developers can easily integrate existing web services with Alexa, or, in just a few hours, they can build entirely new experiences designed around voice. No experience with speech recognition or natural language understanding is required. Amazon does all the work to hear, understand, and process the customer’s spoken request so a developer can build skills in English, and US English.

Skills APIs— Connect to Built-in Capabilities for Customer Convenience

Build Skills with AWS Lambda

The easiest way to build a skill for Alexa is to use AWS Lambda, an innovative compute service that runs a developer’s code in response to triggers and automatically manages the compute resources in the AWS Cloud. There is no need for a developer to provision or continuously run servers. Developers simply upload the code for the new Alexa skill they are creating, and AWS Lambda does the rest, executing the code in response to Alexa voice interactions and automatically managing the compute resources on the developer’s behalf.

Developer Response—Tens of Thousands of Developers Around the World Building Skills

We gave some developers in the UK an early preview of ASK—here’s what they are saying:

BMW, one of the leading automotive manufacturers connecting people, vehicles, and services, is now giving drivers a new voice. “With the arrival of Amazon Echo in the UK and Germany, customers will for the first time be able to manage their personal mobility agenda and operate vehicle functions like “lock doors” via voice command from their homes, thanks to Alexa and BMW Connected. The integration between Alexa and BMW Connected is underlining BMW’s promise to constantly integrate BMW Connected into new touchpoints and to expand its digital services,” says Dieter May, Senior Vice President Digital Services and Business Models at the BMW Group.

EDF Energy, one of the UK’s largest energy companies, is using ASK to provide its customers with a new and easy way to get information about their energy use. “Amazon Alexa creates a fantastic opportunity to simplify life at home for our customers,” said Beatrice Bigois, Managing Director of Customers at EDF Energy. “Our innovation accelerator Blue Lab has used the Alexa Skills Kit to open up new, simple and easy ways for customers to interact with their energy. For instance, customers will be able to speak to Alexa to access their energy account, check their next payment date or give a meter reading. “EDF Energy is very excited about Alexa coming to the UK, and we are proud to be the first energy supplier to offer this service to our customers.”

[Fitbit](#), a leader in the connected health and fitness categories, is leveraging ASK to provide users with voice access to their health and fitness stats. “The integration between Fitbit and Alexa will give our customers in the UK a new and fun way to stay on top of their health and fitness objectives,” said Tim Roberts, Executive Vice President, Interactive at [Fitbit](#). “Leveraging the APIs offered through the Alexa Skills Kit, we created the Fitbit skill to give our users hands-free access to their data within seconds. By creating an easy way to find out their step count or how they slept last night, users can know if they’re on track with their goals – all without needing to check your tracker or Fitbit app.”

Global news organisation, the Guardian is using ASK to enable UK and US users to access Guardian journalism, including podcasts and up-to-the-minute news headlines on demand, just by asking Alexa. “The ways in which people consume news is rapidly changing and we’re excited to be involved with such an innovative product as Amazon Echo,” said Anthony Sullivan, director of product, Guardian News & Media. “For the first time, users in both the US and the UK will be able to access our journalism by simply asking Alexa for the latest news, opinion, reviews and sport from the Guardian. We’re pleased to be able to share our quality journalism in this new way and look forward to seeing how this could be developed further in the future.”

Hive, a leader in smart home technology, is using ASK to enable customers to control their home using just their voice. “We believe giving people the ability to turn down the temperature in a room or dim the lights through simple voice commands will be a game-changer,” said Kass Hussain, Director at Hive. “At Hive, we want to make the smart home accessible to everyone, not just the few. To make this a reality, we must make the technology simple and easy to use, and that’s why we’re so excited about the Alexa Skills Kit. Accessing Hive through Alexa will make life easier for our existing customers, as well as introduce a whole new set of people to the life-changing benefits of being more in control of your home. We’re looking forward to exploring all the possibilities that Hive integration with Alexa opens up.”

The Jamie Oliver Media Group aims to inspire, encourage and empower people who want to cook at home, and will use ASK to provide customers with hands-free access to Jamie’s recipes. “Encouraging people to cook from scratch is at the heart of Jamie’s food revolution and we are always looking for new ways to inspire a healthy approach to food,” said Zoe Collins, Creative Director, Jamie Oliver Media Group. “We are delighted to be part of the Alexa launch with our innovative Jamie Oliver recipe skill, designed to make it easy to find delicious and nutritious meals—even if your hands are busy doing something else—and cook with Jamie virtually at your side.”

Just Eat, a UK digital marketplace for food delivery, is leveraging ASK to allow customers to order food just by asking. “With Just Eat on Alexa, our customers can now order food from over 27,000 restaurants just by asking,” said Fernando Fanton, Chief Product & Technology Officer at Just Eat. “At Just Eat we’re always looking at how we can harness the latest innovations in consumer technology to help make our customers’ lives easier and to make food discovery exciting for everyone. The Just Eat skill for Alexa is a great way for us to continue to make the Just Eat ordering experience part of our customers’ everyday routines and experiences. We’re thrilled to be on board as one of Alexa’s launch skills in the UK.”

Laundrapp, the UK start-up that provides an innovative on-demand laundry service across the UK, has used ASK to empower customers to arrange their laundry or dry cleaning service using just their voice. “We believe Alexa and Amazon Echo have tremendous potential and will offer our customers an even more convenient way to do their dry cleaning,” Edward Relf, Laundrapp CEO & Co-founder, Laundrapp. “Our team has created the world’s first fully voice-activated laundry service on Alexa. All customers have to do is ask Alexa, then relax as Laundrapp collects, cleans and delivers at a time and place they choose.”

Smart home company Netatmo is also integrating its Smart Thermostat with Alexa, leveraging ASK to enable customers to control their energy settings just by asking. “With Amazon Echo and Alexa, our customers can voice-control their heating and improve their comfort at home without lifting a finger,” said Fred Potter, Founder and CEO of Netatmo. “Integrating Amazon Alexa demonstrates our ability to provide our customers with the most advanced technologies—not only are we enabling customers to save of energy and control their heating remotely, they can do so using only their voice. We’re very excited to be part of the launch of Alexa in the UK.”

Rail Delivery Group is using ASK to give passengers access to train schedules through their voice. “We’re pleased to take part in the launch of Alexa, which gives people another quick and easy way to request information from National Rail Enquiries, the definitive source of customer information about rail services across Britain,” said David Gloster, Head of Customer Journey, Rail Delivery Group. “Customers using Alexa will get up-to-the minute information about trains and services right across the network.”

Philips Lighting, a global provider of lighting products, systems and services is using ASK to bring voice control to their Philip Hue’s devices. “Building on the strong relationship we have with Amazon, we’re very pleased to launch our Alexa skill in the UK”, said Sridhar Kumaraswamy, Business Leader Home Systems at Philips Lighting. “Working with leading players like Amazon to take full advantage of the Alexa Skill Kit enables us to deliver entirely new, rich lighting experiences, simply controlled by your voice.”

Global travel search engine Skyscanner is launching a skill for Alexa in the UK, allowing travellers to search for flight dates and prices using a natural conversational search method. “With Skyscanner for Alexa, travellers now have the ability to search for flights with a simple voice conversation, getting suggestions on flights along with the latest prices in just a few words,” said David Low, Head of Bots and Conversational Search at Skyscanner. “At Skyscanner we believe it’s important that we continue to innovate and expand our technology offering as the needs of our travellers evolve, and we’re delighted to be the only travel search engine in the UK to be available through Amazon Alexa at launch.”

Spotify brings people the right music for every moment and is using ASK to give listeners voice control over their playlists on Alexa-enabled devices. “Spotify is committed to making it as easy as possible for our users to enjoy the music they love whenever and wherever they are,” said Ian Geller, Global Head of Hardware Business Development at Spotify. “We’ve enjoyed working with Amazon and we’re thrilled that our customers in the UK can now choose to listen to Spotify as their default music streaming service on Alexa-enabled devices via the Alexa Skills Kit.”

Tuneln allows users to stream audio from around the world and is giving its customers voice control over the service with Alexa. “The expansion of Amazon Echo and Alexa to the UK represents significant growth for Tuneln,” said John Donham, Tuneln CEO. “We are thrilled to work with Amazon as Alexa capabilities expand in one of our fastest growing international regions, helping us achieve our mission of delivering the best listening experiences to people around the world.”

Uber, a global transportation network company, is leveraging ASK to easily let customers order a ride without using a device. “We’re thrilled that the magic of Alexa is now available to more people,” said Rahul Bijor, Head of Product, Strategic Partnerships, Uber. “Having the ability to ask Alexa to get you an Uber just by using your voice takes the magic of getting a ride to an entirely new level. We used to say tap a button get a ride; now with the help of Alexa, you don’t have to lift a finger.”

We invite developers to join the Alexa team at upcoming webinars, hackathons and other in-person events to learn about building Alexa skills. Learn more at get started at <https://developer.amazon.com/en-gb/alexa-skills-kit>.

Alexa Voice Service (AVS)

Alexa-Powered Hardware—Add Alexa to Any Device with a Microphone, a Speaker, and an Internet Connection

The Alexa Voice Service (AVS) allows hardware makers to integrate Alexa into their Internet-connected devices with only a few lines of code in their local language. No experience with natural language understanding or speech recognition is required. Starting in early 2017, developers can take advantage of AVS to integrate Alexa into their devices in UK English. In just over a year since launch, developers have integrated Alexa into a variety of devices including wearables, smart home devices and speakers.

Developer Response

Over a thousand developers are taking advantage of AVS to voice-enable any connected product with a microphone and speaker. Hardware makers are already planning voice-driven experiences for customers in the UK—here’s what those developers are saying:

Pebble, maker of wearable devices, will use AVS to bring Alexa functionality to its customers in new marketplaces. "Voice integration has opened up countless opportunities for wearables, and it's great to see Amazon bring the Alexa Skill Kit and Alexa Voice Services to developers in even more marketplaces around the globe, said Eric Migicovsky, CEO of Pebble." At Pebble, we're big fans of Alexa, and we're excited to be working with Amazon to bring Alexa to Pebble Core, not only in the US, but now in the UK as well."

Sonos, creators of whole-home sound systems, is using AVS to transform their customers listening experience with voice. "Our deep integration with Alexa will allow millions of existing and new Sonos owners to control their home sound system and play music out loud in any room of their home by simply using their voice. That's powerful, and only the beginning of work together with Amazon to create magical experiences for the connected home," said Antoine Leblond, Vice President of Software at Sonos. "We just recently announced our exciting collaboration with Amazon - working together with them from the ground up to bring voice control to Sonos in the US - and now very proud to share that our support will include the UK as well in 2017."

Sound United, makers of home audio brands, Polk and Definitive Technology, will use AVS to bring voice to their products and customers. "What Amazon has created with the Alexa voice experience is remarkable, especially for multi-room music systems," said Kevin Duffy, Chief Executive Officer, Sound United. "We're thrilled to be working with them to bring Alexa to our consumers in the UK and we look forward to shaping the future of the smart home."

Learn more and sign up to be notified when AVS is available in English (UK) at <https://developer.amazon.com/AVS>.

About Amazon

Amazon is guided by four principles: customer obsession rather than competitor focus, passion for invention, commitment to operational excellence, and long-term thinking. Customer reviews, 1-Click shopping, personalized recommendations, Prime, Fulfillment by Amazon, AWS, Kindle Direct Publishing, Kindle, Fire tablets, Fire TV, Amazon Echo, and Alexa are some of the products and services pioneered by Amazon. For more information, visit www.amazon.com/about.