



# Online Safety Newsletter – June 2020

## *Smart Speakers*

Smart speakers have grown in popularity among many households in the UK. Recent research found that over 1-in-5 UK households had a smart speaker. That means that 5.8 million households in the UK now use a smart speaker for things such as listening to music, setting reminders as well as asking everyday questions. But, many people have expressed concerns over privacy and how to stay safe. To make sure you get the most out of your smart speaker, here is a short guide to highlight the range of safety and security features for **Amazon's Echo**, **Google's Nest** and **Apple's Homepod**.

### **Amazon Echo**



Amazon's Echo devices use **Alexa**. Users can order things online, play music, set reminders and get answers to any questions they might have. Amazon has now launched a children's version called the Echo Dot Kids Edition which filters inappropriate words and content.

#### **What do I need?**

- An Amazon Device with Alexa
- An Amazon Account

#### **What Parental Restrictions Does the Echo Have?**

- You can turn off in-app voice purchasing, or set a code to stop children ordering things from Amazon.
- You can easily restrict access via parental controls to inappropriate content, like songs with curse words by creating an age-appropriate account for your children.
- Turn off or restrict 'drop in'. This feature allows users to drop into a video call with someone else's Echo.
- Activate the 'Do Not Disturb' option. This would be most suitable for when your family is sleeping.

**Remember:** you can ask Alexa to delete everything that has been said today. If you want to delete data older than 1 day, simply do so via the App, where you can also adjust settings to automatically delete voice recordings every 3 or 18 months.

## **Google Nest**



Google released the Nest (originally called Google Home) to compete against Amazon's Echo in 2017. Users can avail of all the same features of the Amazon Echo and Google offers users different voices.

### **What do I need?**

- Android device
- Google Account

### **What Parental Restrictions Does the Nest Have?**

- Users can set up Family Link. This is done by setting up another account for your child. This will require another android device but will be controlled from yours. Your child's voice will be added to your Nest.
- Make sure to use Google's Digital Wellbeing tool. This allows users to set up filters for music, video and assistant queries.
- You can turn off Google's Pay Assistant to prevent any unwanted purchases.

**Remember:** just like Alexa, you can delete all voice recordings via the Google Assistant app. You can also adjust settings to automatically delete voice recordings every 3 or 18 months.

## **Apple HomePod**



HomePod is Apple's answer to the Amazon Echo. This smart speaker places a greater emphasis on sound and music quality and uses the well-known AI assistant Siri to help users with a range of tasks such as setting reminders, listening to music, and making purchases.

### **What do I need?**

- An Apple device
- An Apple ID

### **What Parental Restrictions Does the HomePod Have?**

- You can stop your child from accessing explicit content.
- Users might also want to lock personal requests. This is what Apple calls the ability to send and read texts, add reminders and create notes. This will prevent anyone sending messages from your Apple device.
- You can prevent children from making in-app purchases

As with all these Smart Speaker devices, you can delete your voice recordings with Apple's HomePod. It's important to note that Apple will keep recordings from your Speaker for up to 2 years, but they will not be assigned to you as an individual, rather they are listed as random and are kept to help with developing Siri