

## Amazon launches Astro, a Wall-E style home robot that follows you around

Amazon.com Inc announced a household, canine-like robot called Astro and a deal with Walt Disney Co to imbue its voice-controlled tech in resort hotels, striving to make its virtual aide Alexa a bigger part of consumers' lives.

The home robot is designed to take up tasks such as home monitoring, setting up routines and reminders, and can play music and TV shows while rolling around the house.

The device, which has digital eyes on a rotating screen mounted on wheels, is available at an introductory invite-only price of \$999.99 and a regular price of \$1,449.99.

Among other launches in its latest lineup were a smart thermostat, smart display Echo Show 15 and a new health-tracking band called Halo View.

The Echo Show 15 can be mounted on a wall and is



powered with AZ2 Neural Edge, a processor that helps users personalize the screen.

In its push to appeal to the next generation of customers - kids - the company introduced Amazon Glow, a gadget for playing games, reading or drawing while on a video call.

In its partnership with Disney, it will launch an Alexa-powered voice assistant at Disney's theme park hotels, along with a paid feature that lets customers interact with Disney characters at home.

The feature is expected to launch next year and will let users interact with Disney characters with the 'Hey, Disney!' voice command.

Amazon has launched a number of new gadgets every year, including sunglasses with voice control and an in-home drone, that have not become massive sellers. Devices make up for a fraction of Amazon's overall sales.



## Amazon's new multiplayer 'New World' looks to be a massive hit

Amazon's new multiplayer online game, "New World", got off to a roaring start for its release, a test for the tech conglomerate seeking to break into this fast-growing sector. One tracking website showed over 700,000 people were playing at 1800 GMT, making "New World" the most popular game at that moment, according to the website Steam DB.

"New World" takes place on the imaginary island of Aeternum, which players from a civilisation akin to the mid-18th century West must conquer. The title is a so-called "MMO" (Massively Multiplayer Online) game that can bring together thousands of players and sells for \$40 in the United States.

On the Amazon-owned video platform Twitch, which is popular



with gamers, about 900,000 people were watching videos of the new game.

This is not Amazon's first foray in the gaming world, having already launched in early 2019 "The Grand Tour Game", but which the company withdrew in 2020 after a poor reception from critics and players. By October 2020, Amazon had also

discontinued its game "Crucible," which was released only a few months earlier in May.

The New York Times says Amazon has already spent several hundred million dollars in the development of video games, without real success until Tuesday.

"New World" has to be "our breakthrough game - there's no doubt about it," Christoph Hartmann, vice president of Amazon Games, told the paper. "Just for the morale of people, at some point, you want to see some success," he added.

In addition to game publishing, Amazon has been active in the industry for several years. It bought Twitch in 2014 and in 2020 launched Luna, a subscription-based online video game platform.

