

Privacy and security risks of new technology remain unclear, experts warn

Own an Echo? Amazon may be helping itself to your bandwidth

NEW YORK, June 21, (AP): Do you own an Amazon smart device? If so, odds are good that the company is already sharing your internet connection with your neighbors unless you've specifically told it not to.



David Limp, senior vice-president of Devices and Services at Amazon, displays a new Echo, (left), and an Echo Plus during an event announcing several new Amazon products by the company in Seattle. (AP)

The company launched a program that forces users of many Echo smart speakers and Ring security cameras to automatically share a small portion of their home wireless bandwidth with neighbors. The only way to stop it is to turn it off yourself.

Amazon says the program, called Amazon Sidewalk, is a way to make sure lights, smart locks and other gadgets outside the home and out of reach of a Wi-Fi connection stay working.

But some experts warn that the technology is so new that... And almost no one seems happy that Amazon forced consumers into Amazon Sidewalk - or that many people may not know they can opt out of it.

Did Amazon tell customers this was happening? Amazon says it sent emails to customers last month and in November that Sidewalk was coming.

How can I stop this? Once you know about it, it's relatively straightforward, if not exactly simple, to opt out of Sidewalk.

Why is Amazon doing this? The idea behind Sidewalk is to integrate residential wireless connections into a "mesh network" that can extend coverage to areas home Wi-Fi can't reach.

Amazon is tapping into a variety of radio technologies, including one called LoRa for its long range and better known for industrial and business applications such as keeping track of cattle roaming through pastures.

The goal here is not to create coverage for a single home, said Marc Pegulu of chipmaker Semtech, which is partnering with Amazon on the technology.

Thomas Clausen, a computer science professor at France's Ecole Polytechnique, says that the network Amazon is creating could be a good thing provided that it's open and accessible, because it would make it easier and cheaper to use internet-connected devices and sensors and spark new innovations.

What Are The Risks? Hackers could potentially infiltrate home networks via Sidewalk, said Eric Null, a policy manager at digital rights group Access Now.

What does Amazon say? When asked about privacy and security concerns, an Amazon spokesman said he couldn't respond to "hypothetical situations."

Which Devices Want To Share My Internet? Echo devices that share network bandwidth via Sidewalk include the third generation and newer versions of the Echo, Echo Dot, Echo Dot for Kids and the Echo Dot with Clock.

Does Amazon have bigger ambitions? Amazon has explained Sidewalk in the context of consumer devices such as cameras and speakers.

For example, the company could embed tiny internet-connected devices into cardboard packages to help track them, said Clausen of Ecole Polytechnique.

Having integration of alarm systems, presence detection of whether or not people are there, will potentially allow Amazon to create more efficient delivery schedules and fewer re-deliveries, he says.

Wireless networks are already notoriously vulnerable to hacks and breaches, Tong wrote in a statement.

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US gov't needs to 'regulate' automated driving systems

Move to tighten safety of systems, says Ford CEO

DETROIT, June 21, (AP): The CEO of America's second-largest auto company is calling for the federal government to set standards for fully or partially automated vehicles to tighten the safety of electronic driving systems.

In urging federal regulation, Ford CEO Jim Farley becomes the highest-profile auto executive to publicly recognize a need to more closely monitor the emerging technology, which is becoming more prevalent on America's roadways.

Farley's statements, in an interview with The Associated Press, follow increased scrutiny by regulators of Tesla's partially automated "Autopilot" driver-assist system, which has been involved in a series of high-profile crashes.

"Absolutely," Farley said when asked whether federal regulations are needed. "Today, the regulations are state-by-state," he said of fully autonomous vehicles.

He suggested that legislators and the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration were moving too slowly. "Time is of the essence," Farley said, explaining that Argo AI, an autonomous vehicle company in which Ford is a major investor, is moving ahead quickly with technology that will let Ford start an autonomous ride-hailing service.

Argo, which is testing autonomous vehicles with human backup drivers in six U.S. cities, expects to be ready for Ford to offer ride-hailing without human drivers sometime next year. In the Phoenix area, Alphabet Inc.'s Waymo is already offering a limited fully autonomous ride service.

And later this year, Ford will offer "Blue Cruise," its own partially automated highway driving system that, like Tesla's Autopilot, keeps cars centered in their lane and a safe distance behind traffic in front of them.

"We've done the testing to feel comfortable with this system and how it's implemented," Farley said.

The CEO took an implicit jab at Tesla, saying that Ford does its own testing before rolling out the technology. "We don't want our customers to have to do any testing," he said.

Drivers often have thwarted Tesla's efforts to monitor them by detecting hands on the steering wheel. Earlier this month, a man was arrested in California after an officer spotted his Tesla on a freeway with the man riding in the back seat and no one behind the wheel.

AI Kharafi expressed his appreciation to MOH teams for protecting community



Zain, the leading digital service provider in Kuwait, organized a COVID-19 vaccination campaign at its main headquarters in Shuwaikh in collaboration with the Ministry of Health.

Zain considers itself an active partner of the Ministry of Health and other entities in protecting the local community against the threats of the pandemic.

initiatives and programs that contributed to lessening the health, economic, and social impacts of the pandemic.

The internal vaccination campaign was organized in collaboration with the Ministry of Health, and included all of Zain's staff as well as point-of-sale employees who operate across the country.

Zain Vice Chairman and Group CEO Bader Nasser Al Kharafi expressed his appreciation to the Ministry of Health's officials for responding to Zain's call to conduct an internal vaccination campaign, as well as for their keenness on being present at the company's main HQ to coordinate the campaign efficiently.

Al Kharafi added: "my sincere gratitude goes to the teams at MOH

for their efforts, which go in line with the nation's plans to reach social immunity. My thanks also go to all of the country's entities and ministries and our great frontliners."

AI Kharafi continued: "we hope such initiatives would contribute to imprinting a positive impact in strengthening social immunity and supporting MOH's efforts in protecting the community from the pandemic"

Throughout the past 18 months, Zain has showcased the spirit of responsibility as a leading national company by making its human and tech resources available to shoulder the public sector and maintain the nation's wellbeing.

Not only that, but Zain was also keen on continuing its support of social, educational, and cultural initiatives - which it has always been a top supporter of - in a virtual format this time to adhere to official health measures and guidelines to keep everyone involved safe.

Zain's tireless efforts have extended throughout the year, where it has launched its own social initiatives, supported existing health and social programs, in addition to handling the crisis, all under its corporate sustainability and social responsibility strategy.

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Economic Update: Japan's economic activity weakens in May. Includes chart for Eurozone economic sentiment indicator.

Economic Update: India's GDP growth accelerated in Q1 but still modest. Includes chart for Brent crude oil price and chart for India GDP.