

TECH

Amazon's Echo Loop Smart Ring Gives A Whole New Meaning To 'Talk To The Hand'

By [John Koetsier](#), Senior Contributor.  Journalist, analyst, author, podcaster.

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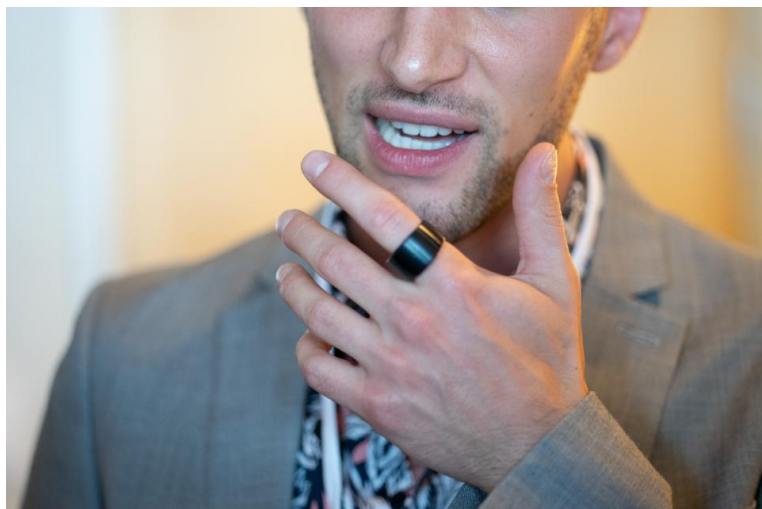
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Amazon's new smart ring is big, fat, and ugly. And it doesn't do much that a smart ring should.

I've been wearing a [Motiv smart ring](#) for the better part of a year now, and while I primarily use my Apple Watch for fitness tracking, the Motiv is a super-small and unobtrusive way to track my sleep patterns as well as monitor activity and health.



A worker demonstrates an Amazon.com Inc. Echo Loop smart ring during an unveiling event at the ... [More](#)

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factor authentication.

Plus, it has three-day battery life, and is much slimmer and more elegant-looking than the Echo Loop.



The Motiv smart ring
MOTIV

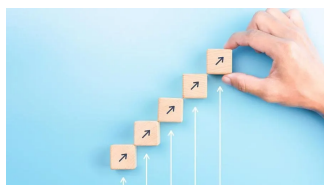
In contrast, the Amazon Echo Loop will put Alexa on your hand – you have been waiting breathlessly for someone to solve desperate need, right? – let you make a quick call, and not much else. Naturally, your smartphone will need to be in Bluetooth range to enable that limited set of functionality.

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Battery life?

“A single charge delivers a day of intermittent

The price you pay for Alexa on your hand is looking like a 1930s-era Dick Tracy flatfoot or a spy-movie security flunky. You hold your hand right over your mouth and press the “action button” (action! how thrilling!) to get Alexa to listen up, and speak away.

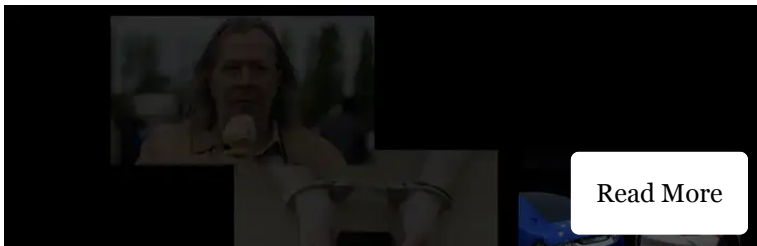
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To listen, you’ll need to hold your hand over your ear.

I’m shocked that Amazon didn’t put a cheap accelerometer in the ring to get motion details that could feed a fitness wearable. And a little heart rate sensor on the inside, to get beats per minute.



That functionality exists now, and is actually useful.

And with the sheer size and bulk of Echo Loop,

power to run Alexa ... and space to fit the microphone and speaker that Alexa requires.



Amazon Echo Loop, close-up.
AMAZON

Why does this ring exist?

Amazon's desperate need is to solve for Alexa being everywhere to compete with the other GAFAM (Google/Amazon/Facebook/Apple/Microsoft) giants.

Google Assistant is everywhere because it's on your phone. Siri is everywhere because it's on your phone. Alexa, however, lives very much at home because she primarily lives on devices that stay home. Amazon tried to enter the smartphone in 2014 market and failed. Its genius jiu-jitsu response was to create a new blue-ocean market: hearables and smart assistants.

But as smart and as successful as that strategy has been, and as hard as Amazon has tried via the Alexa app, Echo in the office, and in-car Alexa

smart assistant needs are largely filled by whatever lives on their phones.

A smart ring – and other wearables like the Echo Buds Amazon also announced – is one way to win the body. Win the body, and you're ubiquitous ... you go wherever your customer goes.

To win in smart rings, though, Amazon needs to up its game and offer more than just Alexa on a fairly unappealing ring. (Rings are jewelry, after all, and need style and panache to succeed.)

We've seen [Alexa in a talking fish](#). We've seen it in appliances. We're seeing it everywhere.

But I'm not sure that by itself, Alexa on a ring is enough to be compelling to very many consumers. Especially when they can just save the \$200 and use Google or Siri.

Or Alexa in an app on their phone.

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