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HDFC Bank experiments voice-activated banking with Amazon's Alexa

BY ASHWANI MISHRA, ETCIO | UPDATED: OCT 11, 2017, 02.14 PM IST

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Mumbai: "Alexa, ask [HDFC Bank](#), what is my account balance?"

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The voice-operated personal assistant Alexa for [Amazon](#) devices, similar to Apple's Siri or Microsoft's Cortana; will now be able to handle your finances—sort of.

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HDFC Bank's customers who own an Alexa-enabled device will be able to check balances, find out when bills are due, and even pay bills through Amazon's virtual assistant in the near future.

"Alexa is a device that is meant to function as a concierge for customers. As of now what we have is a simplistic version of fetching information for customers, that is then converted to voice and begins a conversation. The same concept can get expanded in terms of carrying out a transaction. It will recognize your voice, which becomes the mode of secure authentication; it will then give an alert on your mobile and maybe then you can ask the device to make a bill payment," explains [Nitin Chugh](#), Country Head – Digital Banking, HDFC Bank.

So for example, if picking up your smartphone and opening a banking app feels like too much work, HDFC Bank is working to offer customers the ability to use their voice to get information and even handle transactions for their checking accounts, [credit cards](#) and other financial products.

The bank is trying to look at plenty of used cases across all kinds of devices whether it is a refrigerator or television or an automobile.



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"Alexa's appeal is in making it easier for users to perform tasks or access information. The same thing could be on a dashboard of a car or on a television set that could be gesture or remote enabled. We are not only trying to make sense of everything that is coming around but also looking at what technology solution is the most practical and helpful for consumers. We don't want it to be gimmick. If you notice whatever we are trying to do, it is really about a much differentiated experience for customers dealing with the bank. It is no longer about saying that it is convenient," says Chugh.

The focus on the smart-home devices is the latest frontier where banks and their service/technology providers are testing features on cars, fridges, watches and other Internet of Things (IoT), with voice technology playing a central role to the future of digital interaction.

At this point, though this may be more of a novelty than a powerful [personal finance](#) tool, and not a game changer. However, it certainly is a kind of thing that we may all look back and say, "it was an interesting move."

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