

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

May 10, 2018

Mr. Jeffrey Bezos
Chief Executive Officer
Amazon.com, Inc.
410 Terry Avenue N.
Seattle, WA 9809

Dear Mr. Bezos,

Amazon has announced plans to offer consumers several new products uniquely designed for children, including the new Amazon Echo Dot Kids Edition, a voice-activated “digital assistant” targeted to children. The device provides entertainment including music and storytelling and functions in concert with Amazon’s FreeTime controls software and the FreeTime Unlimited subscription service, which offer users books, television shows, games, and movies for children. While these types of artificial intelligence and voice recognition technology offer potentially new educational and entertainment opportunities, Americans’ privacy, particularly children’s privacy, must be paramount. There is also increasing concern about the effects of digital media and technology use among children and teens. We write to seek information about how Amazon plans to protect the privacy of children who use Amazon Echo Dot Kids Edition and what steps the company is taking to ensure that using this product will not negatively affect children’s development.

We respectfully request that you provide written responses to the following questions by June 1, 2018:


1. Is the audio of children’s interactions with Echo Dot Kids Edition and FreeTime Unlimited recorded and saved? If yes, will these files be converted to text or another format, where will these files be stored, and what data security measures will be taken to protect this information?
2. Please explain parents’ ability to review and delete any recordings of their children’s interaction with Echo Dot Kids Edition and FreeTime Unlimited. Will parents also have the ability to delete other information collected by Amazon, such as records of content accessed by the child?

3. Will Amazon maintain a profile on each child that uses Echo Dot Kids Edition or FreeTime Unlimited? If yes, what information will be kept in the profile? Will Amazon maintain a “voiceprint” that can be used to identify individual children?
4. If a parent does not delete her child’s data, how long does Amazon keep the recordings and other information collected by Echo Dot Kids Edition and FreeTime Unlimited?
5. Please list all third parties that have access to the data collected by Echo Dot Kids Edition and FreeTime Unlimited, and for what purposes they have been granted access to this data. How will Amazon ensure that partners with whom it shares such information employ adequate data security measures?
6. Will the information collected by Echo Dot Kids Edition or FreeTime Unlimited be used for marketing purposes in any way, including, but not limited to, creating profiles about children’s likes and interests, making product recommendations on Amazon.com or the Amazon app, or delivering advertisements?
7. Within what range of distance can Echo Dot Kids Edition transmit and record the spoken voice of children? Describe all ways the recording and transmission functions are activated, the duration of recording/transmission mode after activation, and all methods for turning the device off.
8. Please describe the default setting for the Echo Dot Kids Edition, including default settings for voice recording, range of listening, activation methods, information storing, and methods for turning off the device. How can users change these settings, and how does Amazon make users aware of methods for changing these settings?
9. If a parent does not consent to Amazon collecting information on her child, including recording and retaining voice records and all other data, can the child still use Echo Dot Kids Edition with collection turned off?
10. Where does Amazon plan to post the privacy policy for the Amazon Echo Dot Kids Edition and FreeTime Unlimited offerings?
11. What steps does Amazon take to comply with the Children’s Online Privacy Protection Act (COPPA) in operating Echo Dot Kids Edition and FreeTime Unlimited? How does Amazon obtain verifiable parental consent before collecting personal information from children?

12. Did Amazon work with child development experts while creating the Echo Dot Kids Edition? What mechanisms are in place, if any, to understand the impact of using the Echo Dot Kids Edition on children's development?

Thank you for your attention to this important matter.

Sincerely,

Handwritten signature of Edward J. Markey in blue ink, written over a horizontal line.

Edward J. Markey
United States Senator

Handwritten signature of Joe Barton in blue ink, written over a horizontal line.

Joe Barton
Member of Congress