

11 Smart speakers

What does it do?



Smart speakers are internet-enabled speakers with a voice assistant. Voice assistants can talk to the user (e.g., to read out notifications or reminders) and receive verbal instructions. Smart speakers usually offer a range of functions and are highly customisable. Programmes ("apps" or "skills") can be downloaded. Some smart speakers can be used as [IoT](#) hubs.

What can it be used for?

#Reminder #Instructor Carers can programme regular or one-off reminders and prompts (e.g., to drink regularly) on the smart speaker via a smartphone app or online portal. These reminders or prompts are then read aloud by the voice assistant at the pre-set time. Some apps or skills can guide PwD verbally through an activity (e.g., taking their pills). Some devices can be set to require PwD to acknowledge the reminder verbally.

#CallingForHelp Via smartphone app carers can connect to the smart speaker and listen in or communicate with PwD. PwD can also use the smart speaker to make a call or call for help.

#VisitorNotification Visitors can announce their presence to the smart speaker. Carers can access the visitor log via smartphone app or online platform. This may require a special programme.

#Entertainment #Stimulation Smart speakers can play (curated) music or audio books. Voice assistants can tell jokes and stories. PwD can initiate this with a voice command or carers can activate the playback via smartphone app. Routines can be set up on the smart speaker to prompt PwD to do certain things (e.g., continue audio book or listen to music). Programmes are currently in development to allow users to have natural conversations with the voice assistant.

#AccessingInformation #DementiaClock Users can ask smart speakers for all kinds of information. This can include the time, weather or news or caring advice and information on dementia.

Comment	Rating	Author	Date
I think this could be very useful if used by a person before they have dementia or in the very early stages. My friend would struggle to use this (moderate stage)	3	Violet Tiger	Aug 31, 2020, 02:03 PM
Smart speakers are a good piece of tech to have in general. For those in the early stages of dementia, this could work well. As someone's cognitive ability diminishes, I would be unsure of the benefits.	4	Red Dog 2	Aug 27, 2020, 11:35 AM
Smart speakers can be very beneficial in the earlier stages of dementia. I used to telephone mum to ensure she had taken her tablets so at this stage a voice prompt could have been sufficient. Mum would not have been unable to use the speakers even quite early on in her journey. I do feel that, particularly in the later stages, a disembodied voice may cause distress. However, I can see the benefits of programming the speaker to play familiar music and perhaps react to a person in distress. I personally have no experience of these devices other than in a hospice where a nurse asked the speaker to play a selection of 'Irish folk songs' - the very elderly lady with advanced dementia smiled as the music played. I can see that, for people very familiar with this type of tech, that it could make their journey with dementia less problematic.	n/a	Purple Cat	Jun 30, 2020, 04:44 PM