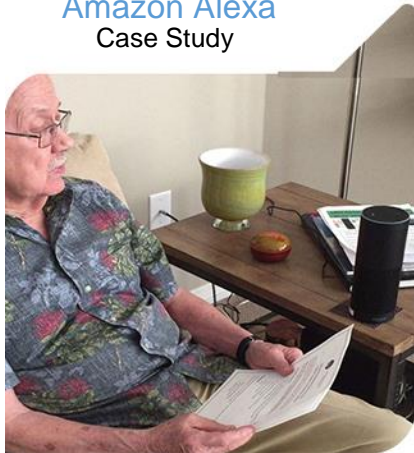




## CENTER FOR INNOVATION AND WELLBEING

### Amazon Alexa Case Study



## A voice-activated model for engagement ... and a world of possibilities.

The [Amazon Alexa](#), a voice-activated personal assistant, has commanded the attention and excitement of consumers since its release in November 2014—and has opened up a new and exciting world. In collaboration with residents and staff at [Carlsbad by the Sea](#), a Front Porch retirement community, the Center for Innovation and Wellbeing launched a pilot to explore the potential use case scenarios of this emerging innovation.

The Amazon Alexa family of the [Echo](#), [Dot](#), and now the [Show](#), has quickly gained widespread appeal in their engagement application among seniors, from the tech adverse to avid early adopters. Some of the cloud-based technology's benefits such as helping with reminders, alarms, entertainment, lighting automation, and answering queries has inspired widespread [discussions in its potential for older adults](#). Additionally, the list of caregiving applications through 3<sup>rd</sup> party Alexa Skills such as [Ask Marvee](#) and [Ask My Buddy](#) continue to grow to meet the demands of family members and loved ones.

“To look at it from a human standpoint, what do we use to get messages across, to communicate?—it’s your voice,” says Gary Groot, a 95-year-old resident. “Yes, we have learned to write, how to type, how to use a computer, but voice is the first and will be there forever, and that’s what the Alexa offers us—it’s a natural thing.”

“I was skeptical of joining the project because of my vision, but my family encouraged me and I’m glad I did,” reflected Lois Seed, an 89-year-old pilot participant with macular degeneration. Seed re-discovered one of her favorite radio stations she hasn’t been able to listen to in years. “It helps me enjoy my lifestyle, life is more enjoyable with Alexa.”

The Center for Innovation and Wellbeing tested these hypotheses by deploying 15 Amazon Echo devices and compatible smart home technologies (smart electric plugs and thermostats) into residents’ homes at Carlsbad By The Sea. Pilot volunteers included people with limited mobilities, vision impairments, and other physical challenges. This pilot demonstration group worked closely with FPCIW and the resident’s technology committee (which distributed an additional 20 Echo Dots) to provide feedback in the form of surveys, focus groups meetings, and phone interviews

over the course of over six months—and the level of interest in the technology has continued to expand. Resident feedback results have indicated high satisfaction with the technology, and even higher interest in the ever-improving features and potential to develop into an effective and convenient communication tool to stay connected with community, friends, family and the digital world.

With training and support provided by FPCIW and further boosted by the enthusiasm of a growing number of residents and staff, nearly half of the entire community population currently uses an Alexa device, and are daily finding new ways to incorporate its use according to each individual's unique needs and lifestyles. FPCIW is in the process of developing an adoption model that will support scaling to additional communities and groups.

Learn more about our Alexa project:

Read the CIW's [Final Report](#) about the Amazon Alexa

Read the [MIT Technology Review: The Octogenarians who Love Amazon's Alexa](#)

#### **About the Front Porch Center for Innovation and Wellbeing**

The Front Porch Center for Innovation and Wellbeing is part of Front Porch®, one of Southern California's largest not-for-profit providers of retirement living communities and affordable housing. The Front Porch Center for Innovation and Wellbeing strives to harness technology solutions that support and enhance wellbeing in older adults. The Front Porch Center's core initiatives focus on how technology can: assist in maintaining brain health; enhance social connectedness; promote engagement and growth; empower control over health and wellness; prevent emergencies or serious events; and increase resources and support for formal and informal caregivers. The Front Porch Center for Innovation and Wellbeing is a signature program of Front Porch's Humanly Possible® commitment to doing everything humanly possible to creatively meet the needs of those we serve today and in the future. The Front Porch Center is the winner of the Bronze Award for the Dignity category in the 2015 McKnight's Technology Awards and the Aging 2.0 Pilot Pioneers 2015 Innovation Award. More information can be found at [www.fpciw.org](http://www.fpciw.org).

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