

Alexa User Research

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Motivation

We interviewed

17

**different
Alexa users**

We asked them about their...

- Reason(s) for buying Alexa
- How/how frequently they interact with Alexa
- Useful/frustrating Alexa interactions
- Use of other smart assistants
- Trust and privacy concerns
- Wishes for the future

Types of Users and Why They Use Alexa

1 College students & new grads who...

need a **reliable alarm** and/or **speaker** to play music

2 Grandparents who...

need to ask **basic questions** on the Internet but **struggle using smartphones**

3 Busy moms who...

need their **hands free** to multi-task (set kitchen timers, pre-heat their oven, or check in on their baby while out)

4 Young children who...

need to be **entertained** and love Alexa jokes

5 Tech geek dads who...

need to keep up with **trends** and are fascinated by **emerging technologies**

What's Alexa doing well?

For starters, it's reliable for simple interactions

100%

of our users agree:

**Alexa is great for asking for
the weather or time or setting
an alarm**

**Alexa responds quickly and
provides accurate information**

- Spotify
- Lights
- Play a podcast
- Weather
- News
- Timer
- Random trivia

What's Alexa doing well?

Second, hands-free convenience.

100%
of our users agree:

They use Alexa when they **don't want to use their phone** i.e. before bed, when hands are full, when can't find TV remote.

Hands-free interaction that is **faster** than using phone/laptop

"Reducing the number of steps to get things... [has] been a trend in technology. The steps to complete a task is lower and lower until you don't have to do anything by hand you don't even have to think before [doing]."

-Sarah M.

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Alexa Cooking

(Asks Alexa to microwave food instead of pressing buttons or set a timer for cooking rice)

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Grocery List

(Telling Alexa to create a grocery list while checking the fridge. List is then ready on Alexa home app)

What's Alexa doing well?

Third, environment control

53%

of our users agree:

Alexa empowers them to conveniently control their home environment, i.e. customizing lights.

It's a game of technology playing with the lights: I can turn them pink and blue, enjoying every little thing—you can make it fun just sitting there! **[Alexa's] about convenience and entertainment.**

-Sarah M.

Opportunity

Alexa as an avenue for self-expression and self-actualization

When the pandemic hit, more people started caring for their homes and putting work into **making their space feel personal and cozy.**

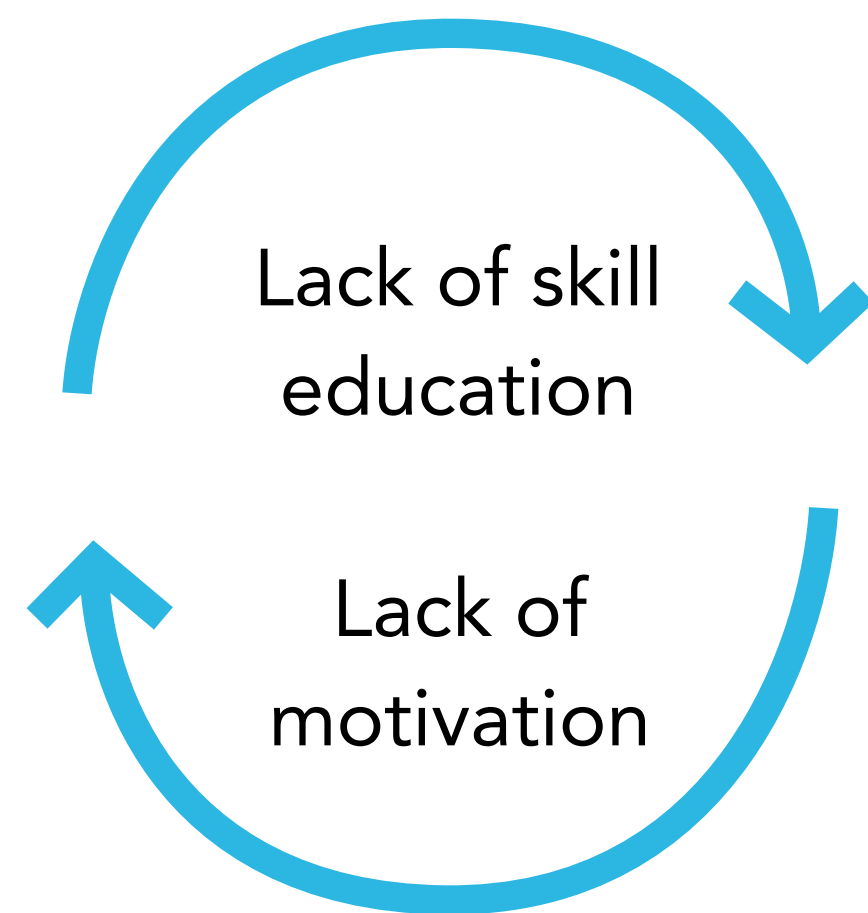
“If I were living in my own place, I’d have a lot more products that are smart than I do now because I don’t care to do it now in my parents home. I would care more in my own place. For me, I want to live every experience to the fullest I can, so any enhancement I can make, I want to do.”

- Medina S.

What can Alexa improve?

Problem: Alexa skills are hard to discover but are useful to users once discovered

82%
of our users agree:



- 1 Lack of education** about how to use Alexa skills (usually only superusers have discover skills through Tik Tok or Reddit)
- 2 Lack of exposure** to skill learning (discovering lightbulb is Alexa-compatible only after seeing lightbulb with Alexa logo at store)
"If I knew other things I could use it with, maybe I would use it more"
- 3 No mental model** of how something like this works
- 4 No encouragement/compelling advertising** to use Alexa skills
"The way you encourage and inform people... Apple has one billboard in [Manhattan Chinatown] that's enough to sell out the inventory."
- 5 Vicious cycle** of lack of skill education leading to lack of motivation and vice versa

Opportunity

Utilize how people learn skills

- 1** People acquire skills by watching other people.
“I saw an ad on TV with a guy in a kitchen, showing all the things he was doing with his Alexa while cooking. That’s how I learned.” -Lucy
- 2** People learn through reinforcement
“A feature that you can ask for, something specific like... play Jeopardy! I have learned that if you do that Alexa simply knows what to do.” -Mary

Alexa is custom to your life, your situation, your home.

What can Alexa improve?

Problem: The phone wins, when it's faster than hands-free interaction

100%
of our users agree:

They prefer phones to complete certain tasks - eg: **scrolling through Spotify playlists, something that takes forever on Alexa** (especially when she recites irrelevant info)

"I don't ask Alexa because it's [easier] to Google [something] on my phone... part of it is a comfort of [not having to speak]."

-Kena C.

What can Alexa improve?

Alexa isn't ingrained into people's digital environments

60%

of our users agree:

Alexa isn't engrained
into people's digital
environments

"I wished Alexa would integrate with my iPhone to see my reminders and calendar and read things out to me."

- Eugene L.

"I feel she is just an encyclopedia. There for people's convenience. But ultimately the **biggest turn off is the fact that it doesn't integrate well with an iPhone.** All Alexa users I know have iPhones. And I'm like how do you utilize it fully."

- Medina S.

Opportunity

Alexa as a universal interface for unfamiliar places, such as hotel rooms

Hotel rooms can be confusing;
guests need to know—

Where are the lights?

How do you operate the TV
remote?

How do I call the front desk?

With Alexa, users will have a
sense of familiarity wherever
they go. This would also help
with **discoverability** of Alexa
devices.

What can Alexa improve?

Alexa products aren't differentiated well enough to motivate people to buy

67%
of our users:

Don't feel a sense of brand loyalty towards Alexa products.

"When Apple drops an iPhone everyone is talking about it. Amazon doesn't have that factor that Apple has."

- Sarah M.

Perhaps that's because each product is trying to accomplish too much at once.

What can Alexa improve?

Alexa's lengthy responses

74%
of our users:

Felt frustrated by
Alexa's long responses

"In general I don't really like to have multiple back and forths with Alexa. At some point she misunderstands, there's no point to easily go back. There's no, let me go back and clarify."

-Izzy G.

What can Alexa improve?

The idea of speaking to Alexa while alone in a bedroom is weird

62%
of our users:

Feel strange talking to
Alexa when alone

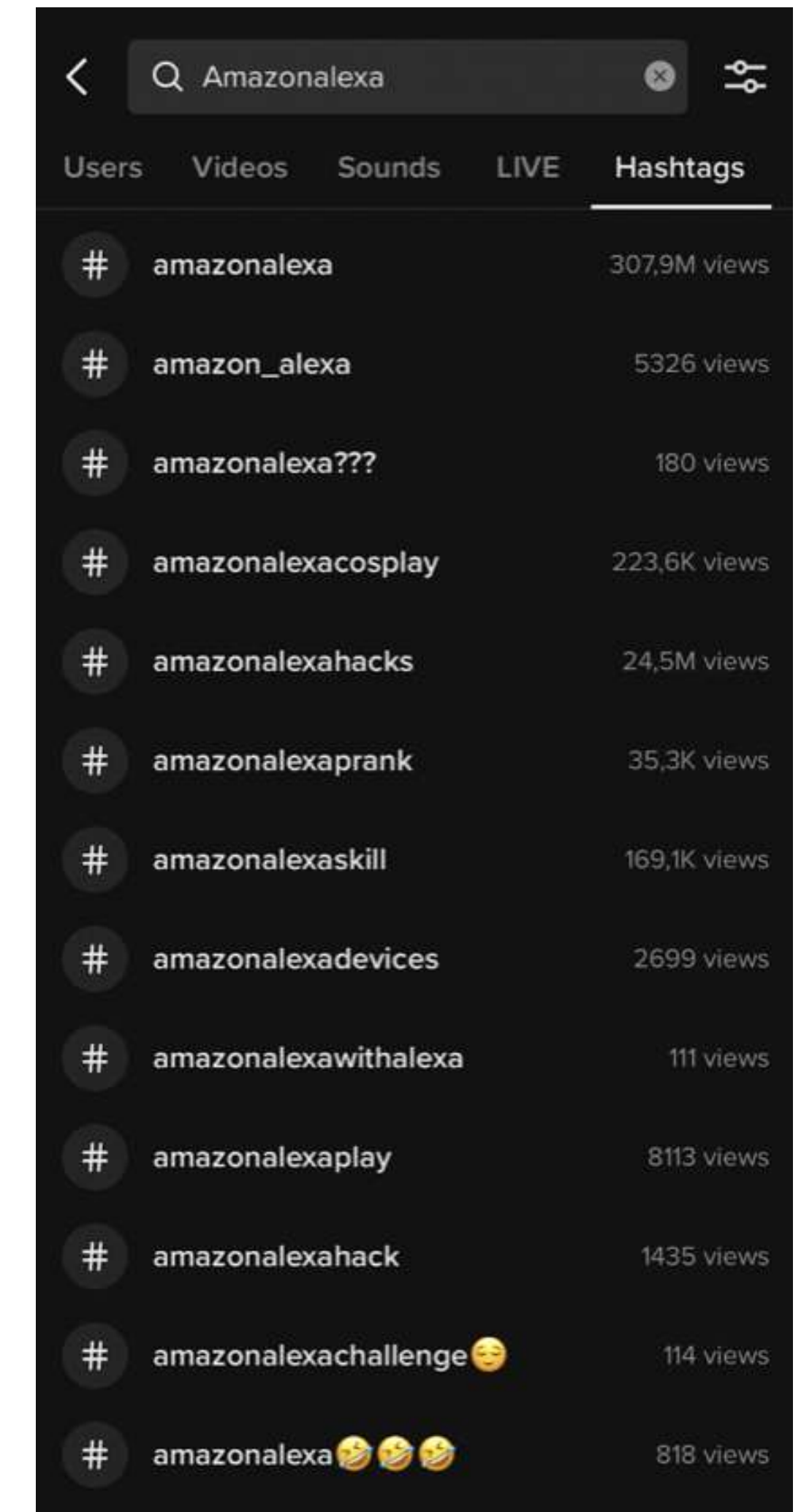
“There’s something weird about speaking alone in your bedroom, speaking to a machine, or speaking when no one’s there is weird and uncomfortable.” - Kena C.

Opportunity for people to speak a different language?

What can Alexa improve?

Alexa is not utilizing its advertisements on platforms like TikTok for learning but for...

- 1 Interactions with alexa feature very **specific hacks**, like the "up-down hack" or used for comedic purposes.
- 2 Product review channels that add products to their storefront to receive commission from selling anything purchased through their link.



What can Alexa improve?

Most TikTok's are not about skill discovery

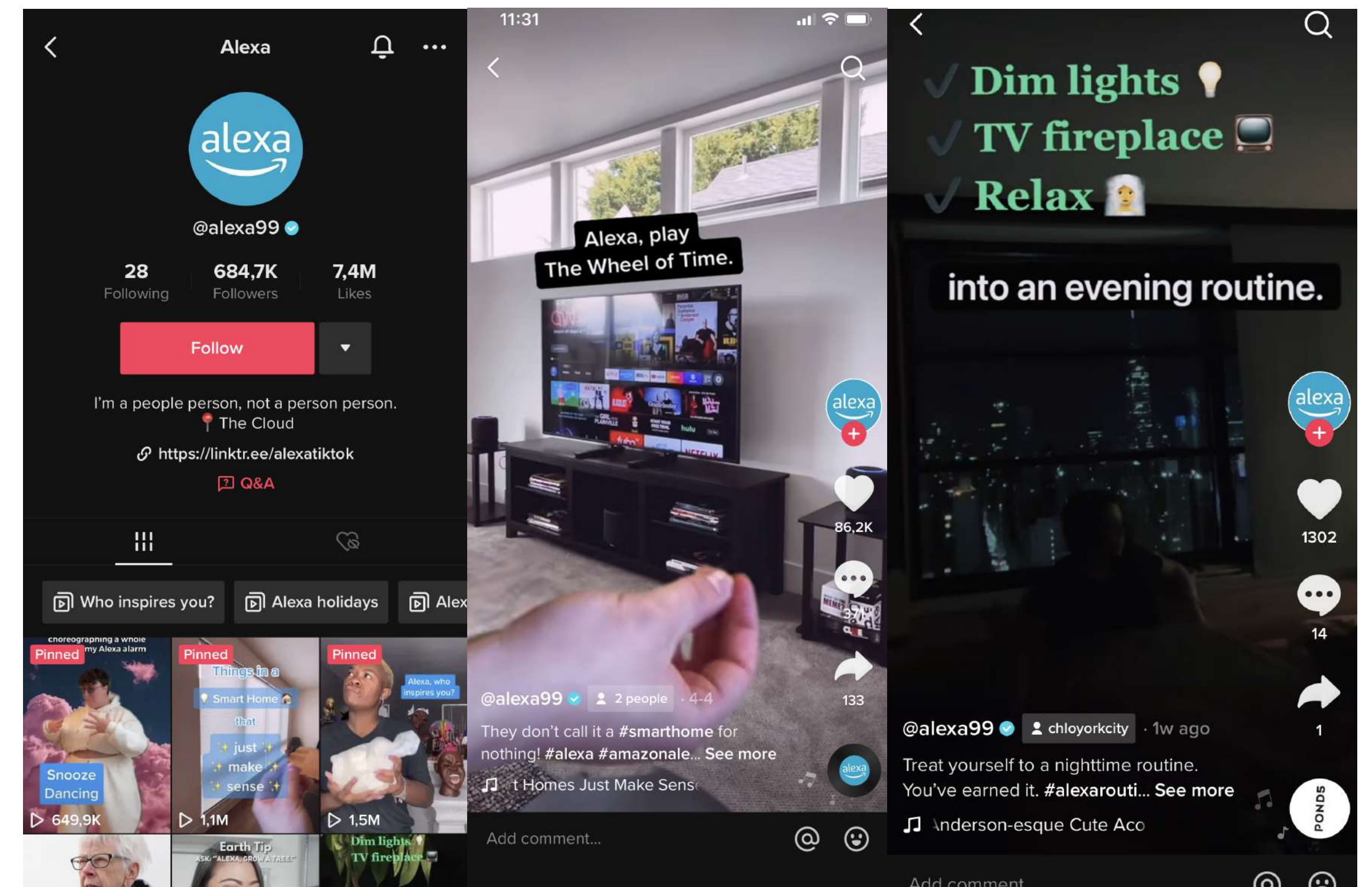
- 1 **Specific hacks:** Tiktok that shows how telling Alexa legendary Konami code can activate easter egg response.
- 2 **Viral interactions:** TikTok star who discovered Amazon has 3000+ recordings of her stored on Echo.
- 3 **Sponsored content:** Product review channels that sell Alexa devices through their storefront.

Opportunity

Use current Alexa online presence for skill discovery

#AlexaSkills has a total of 17 videos on Tiktok. **TikTok is widely under-utilized for skill learning.**

Alexa has access to marketing channels with a reach of 700k+ potential users whom **Amazon could teach skills to, such as an evening routine.**



Takeaways

Alexa's strengths are **simple interactions** that provide users with **hands-free convenience** and unique **control of their home environment**.

But...

Takeaways

Users are **unsure about Alexa's capabilities**. There is ambiguity about which skills are built-in and what users have to download.

The Alexa team should focus on **educating users** about Alexa's full capabilities through stimulating visual media that reinforces learning, i.e. **TikTok**.