

Internet of Things

Student Creates Voice Recognition System Using Amazon Echo to Get Around Campus

- By Dian Schaffhauser
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Gutierrez and the Echo Dot

A senior at [Miami Dade College's West Campus](#) has programmed the [Amazon Echo](#) to help students in need of directions, department hours and other information.

Computer science student Andres Gutierrez tapped into Alexa, Amazon's cloud-based voice recognition service, on an Echo Dot using [Node.js](#), a JavaScript runtime built on [Chrome's V8 JavaScript](#) engine. Gutierrez had help from Pedro Santos, manager of the campus's [Media and Network Services](#) department, where the student served as an intern earlier this year.

According to coverage in Miami Dade College's newspaper, [The Reporter](#), Santos was interested in creating technology to help students. The two "brainstormed" and came up with the Echo Dot programming project. Now the device sits in the main rotunda on the first floor at West Campus.

To interact with Alexa, a student says, "Alexa, ask West," followed by a question. In a demo profiled in the article, Gutierrez asked Alexa where "testing" was. The response: "Testing is in room 2110, which is down the hall on your right, past the admissions center."

Alexa has been programmed with information about events, specific locations, department hours of operation and other general information about the campus and its administration.

When Amazon heard about the project, the company sent the student a t-shirt showing a deconstructed Amazon Echo Dot on the front and the phrase "Amazon Alexa // Developer" on the back.

When Gutierrez graduates next spring, he hopes to move on to [MIT](#). But he's already lined up a successor to take over the Alexa work. Andres Mota, a new staff member on the media and networking team, will continue developing and refining Alexa's knowledgebase, while the college eyes an expansion of the service to other sites, as well as to additional campuses.

About the Author

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