

TV anchor says live on-air 'Alexa, order me a dollhouse' – guess what happens next

Story on accidental order begets story on accidental order begets accidental order

By Shaun Nichols, 7 Jan 2017

A San Diego TV station sparked complaints this week – after an on-air report about a girl who ordered a dollhouse via her parents' Amazon Echo caused Echoes in viewers' homes to also attempt to order dollhouses.

Telly station CW-6 [said the blunder](#) happened during a Thursday morning news package about a Texan six-year-old who [racked up big charges](#) while talking to an Echo gadget in her home. According to her parents' Amazon account, their daughter said: "Can you play dollhouse with me and get me a dollhouse?" Next thing they knew, a \$160 KidKraft Sparkle Mansion dollhouse and four pounds of sugar cookies arrived on their doorstep.

During that story's segment, a CW-6 news presenter remarked: "I love the little girl, saying 'Alexa ordered me a dollhouse'."

That, apparently, was enough to set off Alexa-powered Echo boxes around San Diego on their own shopping sprees. The California station admitted plenty of viewers complained that the TV broadcast caused their voice-controlled personal assistants to try to place orders for dollhouses on Amazon.

We'll take this opportunity to point out that voice-command purchasing is [enabled by default](#) on Alexa devices.

This is not the first time an ill-conceived TV spot has caused havoc with voice-control systems. [In 2014](#), a Microsoft Xbox commercial featuring actor Aaron Paul demonstrating Kinect voice control was blamed for causing consoles across the US to spontaneously boot up and launch the game *Titanfall* every time the ad aired. ®

Facebook and Twitter share icons with a '109 Comments' button.





Sponsored: [Next gen cybersecurity. Visit The Register's security hub](#)

Navigation buttons: 'Previous' and 'Next'.

Related stories

- Mattel's parenting takeover continues with Alexa-like dystopia
- US cops seek Amazon Echo data for murder inquiry
- 2016: The Rise of the Intelligent (cloud) Machines
- Cuckoo! Google settles into Nest, starts folding dev platform
- Guessing valid credit card numbers in six seconds? Priceless

Spotlight

 Mattel's parenting takeover continues with Alexa-like dystopia	 Speaking in Tech: 'You idiot - you could've done that in 3 clicks'
 Virtual reality is actually made of smartphones	 Slim pickings by the Biggest Loser: A year of fitness wearables

Explore The Register

- Forums
- Video
- The Channel
- Privacy
- Send us news tips
- Advertise with us
- Company info

Apps   

Follow us   

Text size [A](#) [A](#) [A](#) [A](#) [A](#) [A](#)

[Change to Desktop edition](#)