# Amazon Astro Household Robot to Improve Home Life for Users Across the US

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### Commentary: Amazon's recently announced Alexa-based home robot may finally be the one that succeeds.

Amazon surprised everyone by announcing Astro, the new autonomous household robot, at their product launch event at the end of September. Since the Alexa-powered machine rolled onstage, we've discovered that it can do more than just beatbox and make us feel nostalgic for everyone’s favorite animated trash-compressing robot.

At a $999 starting price, the cost of the Astro is set to go up to $1,449 once the introductory period has ended. It’s available for preorder exclusively through invite and will only ship to addresses within the United States. From sensing unrecognized people to sounds like smoke detectors and breaking glass, Astro is essentially an Alexa on wheels that can be controlled remotely to monitor your home while you’re away. This self-sufficient robot can also be beneficial when you want to check in on young or elderly family members. It’s designed to learn your habits, making it more useful the longer you use it.

The Astro can follow you around and play music or podcasts, send messages, make calls, video-chat, and set alarms, timers, and reminders. The lithium-ion battery can achieve a full charge in roughly 45 minutes and typically runs for a few hours before needing a refill. The detachable storage bin also allows you to easily carry and deliver items to other people in the house using visual IDs. Additionally, the robot can integrate with [Ring's security alarm system](https://www.cnet.com/home/security/ring-alarm-pro-merges-a-router-and-a-security-system/) to capture video of events and send them to the cloud. The Astro app can also be used to set up "out-of-bounds zones" to prevent it from getting into any trouble.

For all the good Astro can do, it has several limitations that may keep it from reaching its full potential. For one, the robot can’t use the stairs. This means it’s less useful in a home with more than two stories. Though it’s easy to move at a weight of 20.6 pounds, carrying the Astro up and down the stairs to be used in any part of the home is less than convenient. It can also only be used inside, which means that the device can’t check in on your kids as they play in the backyard or older family members while gardening.

The app also has to be paired with the robot to access live view. So, if it’s on the fritz, you won’t be able to see what’s going on in real time. Additionally, though Amazon says it will let customers return Astro for free, you can only do so if it’s unused. This means no testing out the merchandise before committing to determine if it’s a good fit for your lifestyle.

With the Amazon Astro 2 already in the works, the company has pledged a long-term commitment to robots. Though there are still plenty of questions about the robot that have yet to be answered, the long list of features points towards a possible win for the e-commerce giant. If the list of available features continues to expand and improve over time, the Astro just might revolutionize the tech world forever.