

Do you own an Amazon gadget that uses Alexa - Devices like Echo speakers or displays, or Ring devices like a Video Doorbell or motion lights or camera?

Then you need to know about a new Amazon service named “Sidewalk”, along with an explanation of why you should be concerned about it.

On June 8th, many people who own Amazon devices were automatically enrolled in a new program that Amazon calls Sidewalk.

Amazon did not communicate with all users beforehand to explain what this service is and they did not communicate with all users to ask the users permission to Opt In.

Basically, it allows anyone who uses an Amazon compatible product to unknowingly “share” their internet connection with other Amazon device users that are close by.

As an example, If your neighbor’s Ring internet-connected doorbell camera has a poor internet connection and any Amazon devices of yours have a strong signal, you could unknowingly “share” your internet bandwidth with your neighbor.

Amazon does have an explanation of what Sidewalk is on its website, but here is the simple version:

Devices that will join Sidewalk are generally newer Amazon products. By default, Amazon devices that include Alexa - like Echo speakers and displays etc; Ring’s security cameras, video doorbells, outdoor lights, motion sensors etc.; and Tile trackers will automatically “enroll” in the Sidewalk system.

While on the surface, Amazon’s intentions with Sidewalk might seem ok, but **security experts have raised concerns because there are many unknowns.**

Some of the many concerns include these questions (and there are many more):

What if hackers infiltrate the network and hijack devices?
(That has happened before with Ring devices.)

What if sharing your internet connection violates the terms-of-service agreements you have with your internet providers?

Being a part of this new service, Sidewalk , makes **you** an early test subject, and it will be no fun when or if something goes wrong.

Many people also do not like being automatically enrolled in a data-sharing program, no matter what Amazon says is the intent.

There are enough obvious and theoretical risks that should give users pause.

If this bothers you,

Here are the steps to opt out:

Note: If you do not see the Sidewalk options in your settings, it means your device is not compatible with the new program.

If you use an Amazon Alexa product:

1. In the Amazon Alexa app on your device,
Tap More in the lower right hand corner of the screen,
2. Then Tap Settings,
3. then Tap Account Settings,
4. then Tap Amazon Sidewalk,
5. Toggle “Sidewalk” to the off (Disabled) position.

If you use a Ring product:

1. In the Ring app on your device,
Tap the three-lined icon in the upper left hand corner of the screen,
2. Then Tap Control Center,
3. Then Tap Amazon Sidewalk,
4. Then slide the button to the off position.
