Futuresource: Virtual Assistants Appear Everywhere

Written by Marco Attard
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Virtual Assistants (VAs) are set to become the next-generation go-to interface, Futuresource reports-- with 41.8% of all home audio shipments of Q4 2018 featuring integrated VAs, an increase of 50% over Q4 2017.

In addition, Q4 2018 smart speaker shipments are up by 79% Y-o-Y.

"But it's no longer all about the smart speaker," the analyst says. "For TVs, VAs are being rolled out by leading brands such as LG, Sony, Panasonic and Samsung. Most involve a microphone in the remote control, similar to those used in media streamers, assuring a continued lifespan for the trusty set until manufacturers include microphones in the sets themselves. This can be costly and will require solutions for technical issues around noise and echo cancellation, due to microphones being located adjacent to TV speakers."

Soundbars are another product category featuring VAs, as vendors including Bose, Denon, Polk, Samsung, Sony and Yamaha are rolling products with either "built-in" or "works with." Smart soundbars make 5% of total Q4 2018 soundbar shipments, and Futuresource predicts "substantial uplift" for 2019.

Currently smartphones account for the majority of the global VA market with 71% of 2018 shipments. Home CE, PCs and automotive account for 15%, 13% and 1% respectively. By 2022, Futuresource predicts, smartphone, home CE and automotive will increase in market share, at the expense of PCs.

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The future should become even more interesting with the introduction of Google Assistant Connect-- a chip solution audio makers can include in products allowing for Google Assistant capability by allowing an audio product to rely on another Google Assistant device in the home. Thus vendors do not need to embed microphones and processing hardware in devices, while still providing means for voice control.

"In this new VA-enabled world we're going to have even easier access to effective browsing and discovery of content, providing an essential shortcut through the user interface and improving the overall user experience," the analyst concludes. "We'll use VAs to search online, to compile our shopping lists and make those purchases, manage our schedules, control our home automation systems and our smart devices, command our autonomous vehicles and so much more. It's great news for hardware makers, content providers and consumers alike."

Go [Virtual Assistants Establish Strategic Role in Multiple Categories](#)