



## ALEXA, LIS-MOI LES NOUVELLES

Source: Media in Canada

Date: 09/20/2019

### **Analytics firm eMarketer has upgraded its forecast for the Canadian smart-speaker market thanks to a key new skill.**

Since the two biggest smart speaker brands – Google Home and Amazon Echo – hit the market in Canada two years ago, the country has served as somewhat of an anomaly. While Alexa, the AI-powered assistant found in Amazon's speakers, tends to be the most popular system for the home speaker market in most countries, the Google Home line of products has been dominant in Canada, thanks in part to launching six months earlier. The brand also embarked on noteworthy marketing efforts including a partnership with the Toronto Raptors and OOH takeovers in TTC subway stations. As of February, according to Audience Insights, Google Home was at more than double the penetration of Amazon Echo in Canada, at 14% and 6% respectively.

But with Alexa's new French-language option now six months in, could things be set to change? Global ad analytics firm eMarketer has revised its forecasts of the Canadian smart-speaker marketplace.

This year, eMarketer predicts 6.3 million Canadians will use a smart speaker at least once per month, which is up from the 5.3 million it forecast in January. Having previously only predicted that speakers would reach 6.3 million Canadians by mid-2020, eMarketer now predicts that by that time, around 7 million Canadians will use the devices monthly. By 2021, that's set to top 8 million.

EMarketer doesn't predict that Amazon will overtake Google anytime soon in the smart speaker market, but the firm added that Alexa learning Canadian French – a skill Google Home entered the market with – will deliver a significant boost to the market. While the most popular use of smart speakers, according to the MTM, is to stream music (the favoured activity for 77% of smart speakers), French language could lead to drastic change, considering the second- and third-most popular activities for smart speaker users are to check the weather (57%) and use the search function (43%). Media companies in Canada have also been quick to create smart speaker functions for headlines and highlights, including theScore and Bell Media.

Despite Amazon's growing ad business across its search and video business, the company has stated numerous times that it is not currently considering audio ads through Alexa, despite several reports asserting that the company is testing them. Meanwhile, Canadian agencies have stated that clients would likely love the option. Nick Barbuto, managing director of OMD's Ignition Factory, told MiC in a previous interview the agency "could have had two or three clients participating in it already if we could."