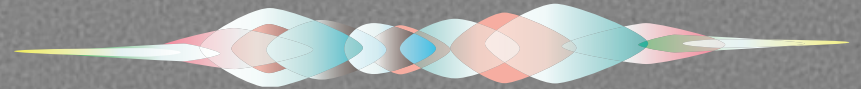


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# Apple's "Beautiful" Victory

Is Siri really just a virtual assistant?



# Apple's "Beautiful" Victory

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Siri is a virtual personal assistant created by the Apple company for all their devices which functions through voice recognition and is seen as a form of artificial intelligence (AI). Apple first introduced the Siri feature for the iPhone 4S in October 2011. When it was released this was seen as a revolutionary feature that would lead the world of virtual assistants. Since then Siri has been developed to assist with multiple things on the iPhone or Mac. Even though Siri is a major development in technology there has been concerns with the background works of Siri. People have asked, does she listen to us without being activated?, or does Apple store our Siri recordings for their own use?. Apple has also released their concerns about the questions Siri has been asked and it is assumed this is due to the use of a female voice for Siri.

The establishment of Siri started with a software acquired from a company called SRI International, with this software Apple has



only developed it since then. Furthermore, they partnered with a company called Nuance communication who provided the speech recognition mechanism which powers the virtual assistant Siri. From there Apple put its own stamp on Siri, they hired a famous American Voice actor named Susan Bennet, because she was well known people felt comfortable using Siri. The current Siri voice is still Susan Bennet but users can now change it to a male voice. The name Siri has also been said to mean 'beautiful victory' which is surprisingly very Apple-like as the products created are often described as a beautiful piece of technology, and those products are no doubt victorious in the tech market. With that being said many know Siri but have no idea about her innerworks. So this is how it works, Apple enabled a speech recogniser to be running constantly as it listens for the commandment we all know as " Hey Siri". When this is detected a Deep Neural Network (DNN) is used to transform the acoustic pattern of the user's voice into

a likelihood distribution over the correct speech sounds. Finally it then uses a temporal integration process to compute a confidence score that “hey siri” was said, if that score is high, siri is then activated. This just adds onto the concern that Siri is always listening in and maybe there are more?. Infact back in 2019 an article was released by CNBC stating that Apple had a ‘Siri grading program’ where it allowed contractors to listen to recordings from users speaking to Siri. This programme was quickly shut down when the Guardian reported that workers at Apple Europe heard personal details when listening to these recordings. Yes, even after these allegations were released Apple said that they will still use computer generated transcripts to help siri ‘improve’. Furthermore they also stated that only their employees and no contractors will be allowed to listen to recordings. Yes this has caused major concerns amongst the Apple users worldwide but they still continue

to use iphones as it is said to be ‘victorious’ amongst other phone brands.

This shows that the relationship apple users have with their iphones is a committed one. Siri has helped to develop this relationship as people feel very comfortable and curious about Siri and ask questions that they would not dare to say to other people. These questions are like ‘hey siri, red pill or blue pill?’, or “hey siri, talk dirty to me”. But Apple has programmed Siri in a way that enabled her to appropriately answer these questions by differing them into another context. There are still other ways for people to physically access the device with a simple command or tap such as Siri. The on/off button can easily trigger Siri and you could tell it to send a message or call someone and there is also a sidebar menu where widgets are used to store information. This can be turned off but generally with new phones it is enabled already.

So yes, Siri is a ‘beautiful victory’ for the Apple company but since more people have come to understand it, their concerns are growing and people are rejecting it as they dont want technology to invade their life and privacy.



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