(Approx. 415 words)

President’s Message

New Amazon Alexa Skill (Plex)

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In a constant search for new things to try, I came across a new Amazon Alexa skill that I thought would be of interest to club members.

Requesting music on an Amazon Echo smart speaker or an Echo Dot, always seems to get an invitation to subscribe to more songs than I could ever listen to, for a monthly fee. Since I have a CD collection of the artists I enjoy, I’ve avoided signing up. The problem is – how do I play my music collection on my Amazon Echo smart speakers? I began looking for a solution and came across an Alexa skill that makes use of my Plex (www.plex.tv) media server.

What, you ask, is a Plex media server? In my case it’s an always-on Windows 10 PC that resides on my network and has multiple drives with media such as music, movies and photos. The Plex media server organizes my music, photos and movies from various locations on my network and streams them to other devices such as a television, computer or personal device or an Amazon Echo. There is a free version of the Plex Media Server app and various paid versions which offer additional features. I am using the free version of Plex Media Server in conjunction with my Playon (www.playon.tv) app to record streaming videos from free services such as Tubi, Prime Video, the Roku Channel and many paid services you may subscribe to.

You can enable the Plex skill on your Amazon Echo smart speaker by opening the Alexa app on your computer or mobile device and looking for skills on the list on the menu on the left of your screen, select and then enter Plex in the search box. With your Plex media server on your same network and configured properly you can say “Alexa, ask Plex to play (artist, song or album). I am still organizing my music collection, but I am amazed at how the Plex skill is able to locate specific songs or artists multiple folders deep. You can also add a Plex channel to your Roku device and watch movies, view photographs and play music stored on your Plex server.

While this may not be for everyone since it requires some “tweaking” it is a challenging task that let you play your music collection on you Amazon Smart speakers.

Until next month …