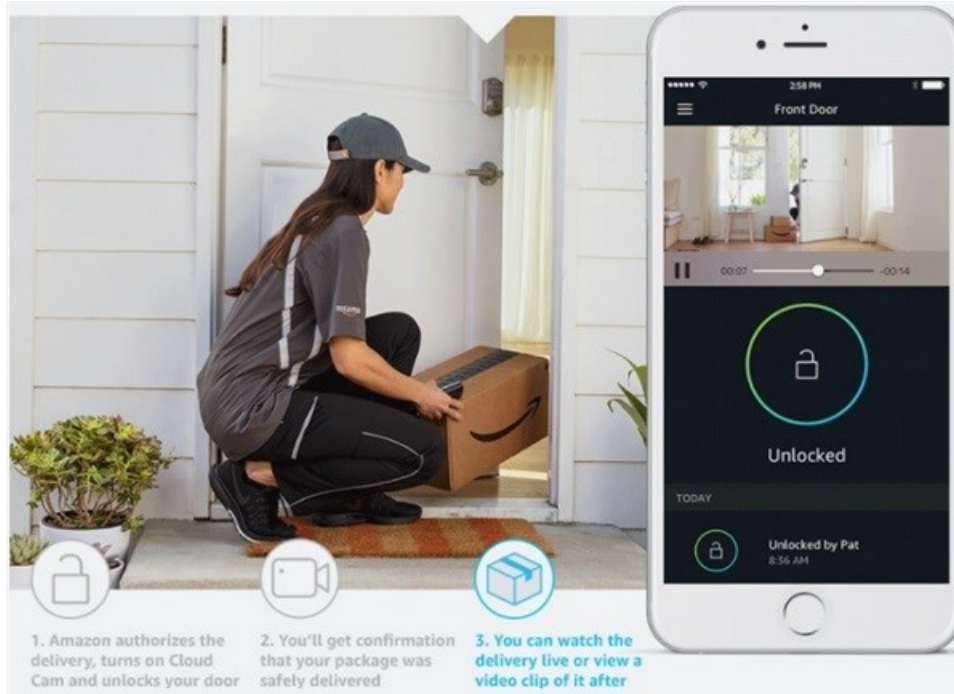


Amazon stretches delivery arm inside houses

SAN FRANCISCO, US: Amazon stretched its delivery arm inside homes on Wednesday with a smart lock and camera combination that also signalled a move into home security.



"Amazon Key" will be available exclusively to members of the internet giant's Prime subscription service when it launches on 8 November in 37 cities in the US, the company said in a release.

Key is designed to provide a secure and trackable way for packages to be delivered inside homes when people aren't there. Each Key kit includes an Amazon Cloud Cam synched to the internet and a smart door lock from either Yale or Kwikset. Prices for kits start at \$250, according to Seattle-based Amazon.

Prime members with the service can use a smartphone application to track packages and then watch deliveries happening or review video of in-home drop-offs, the company said. Key allows someone making a delivery to request access to the recipient's home, with Amazon checking to make sure the proper driver is at the right location at the intended time before unlocking doors, according to a description of the service.

A Cloud Cam providing a view of the inside entryway spurs into action when doors are unlocked, recording a delivery.

Delivery people will not be given access codes, as unlocking doors will be done via the internet.

"Amazon Key gives customers peace of mind knowing their orders have been safely delivered to their homes and are waiting for them when they walk through their doors," said Amazon vice president of delivery Peter Larsen.

The Key in-home delivery option will be available at no extra charge to Prime subscribers. Prime features include free delivery of Amazon purchases, along with streamed television and film offerings. Key will also offer to arrange access for other visitors, such as friends or family.

Amazon said it is working on partnerships with professional service providers such as cleaners, pet sitters, and dog walkers to allow Key to be used to allow them access into houses as desired by customers.

"We are thrilled to be teaming up with Amazon," said Nik Varty, chief executive of Merry Maids parent company ServiceMaster. "Amazon Key will make it even easier to cross a major chore off your to-do list by letting the professionals at Merry Maids take care of the house cleaning while you're not home."

US retail giant and staunch Amazon rival Walmart last month [announced it was testing](#) its own in-home delivery in collaboration with a company specializing in smart cameras, doorbells, and locks.

Amazon said its new security camera will be able to synch with Echo smart speakers and their built-in Alexa digital assistant software. A move into home security would also open a new competitive front with Google's parent company Alphabet, owner of Nest Labs which recently expanded its line of products aimed at that market.

Source: AFP

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