

Amazon Key Not Ready for Prime Time

October 27, 2017 - As an Amazon Prime member I was very happy to receive a message from Amazon earlier this week about Amazon Key - a new product for Prime members that get's your packages delivered to the inside of your property. After all, anything that gets Amazon to stop dropping packages on my front steps - visible to anyone who drives by including thieves - would really improve their service. Unfortunately, after looking at their marketing information and speaking with their customer service people, I've come to the conclusion that the trade-offs between convenience and privacy are much too great to purchase Amazon Key, and that the product really isn't that well thought out.

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Amazon Key isn't cheap. It costs around \$275 if you install it yourself. More if you have to hire someone else to do it. The product consists of a lock which can be operated from your smart phone and a camera.

The idea is that you install the lock on your front door and place the camera inside your home to record anyone who enters. Once installed, anytime you receive a package from Amazon, the driver will open your front door and leave the package just inside. The camera will record the delivery and let you know if your delivery driver goes wandering through your house without authorization. As a convenience, you can also open your door remotely to let other people enter your home, such as repair men.

Personally, I see no need to allow Amazon into my house. I'd much prefer the delivery driver leave packages just inside my side-gate. That gate has a deadbolt on it, but I thought I might be able to use Amazon Key on it. So I contacted Amazon's customer service; first by chat and then by phone.

To make a long story short, Amazon told me that I couldn't install the lock on anything other than my front door. And since Amazon won't allow users to include detailed delivery instructions with their orders, they have no way to notify the driver to leave packages on the side of your house, or inside a gate.

I'm also not sure why I need to purchase a camera from Amazon when my house already has other cameras.

It's pretty apparent that Amazon could have worked with other companies to develop a product much more compelling than Amazon Key. For instance, they could have worked with RING doorbells or SimpliSafe to integrate existing video and alarm systems with the key. But they didn't and you have to wonder why. In fact, if you have an alarm system,

Amazon tells you to turn it off when you are expecting a delivery if you have installed Amazon Key. The word "lame" comes to mind.

Amazon knows that packages get stolen off of doorsteps every single day. Amazon Key, as it stands right now, appears to be a way for the company to gain access to your home and increase their revenues curing a problem that they created and could easily solve for free. Simply allow customers to include delivery instructions on orders. In my opinion, Amazon Key is comparable to the credit monitoring services sold by the big three credit reporting agencies. At ACCESS we've always said that credit monitoring is a worthless product. Take from that comparison what you will. In its current iteration, Amazon Key won't be on my purchase list anytime soon.

by Jim Malmberg

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