

Sonos Shifts Focus from Hardware

Written by Marco Attard
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Connected speaker maker Sonos announces a shift away from hardware-- instead the company will set its focus on streaming services and voice control, and as a result is "letting go of some employees."



The (somewhat vague) blog post by CEO John Macfarlane announcing the situation fails to detail how many Sonos employees are getting slashed, instead simply putting the blame on a music industry in a state of transition.

"We're not chasing short-term gains or answering to impatient investors," Macfarlane writes. "Rather, we're making a decision to substantially and confidently increase our investment in the future of music."

And what is the future of music according to Macfarlane? First off it involves streaming. This year already saw Sonos team up with Apple in Music-- as in the streaming service-- and the company will continue investing in "building rich incredibly rich experiences [...] and will be at the vanguard of what it means to listen to music at home." Does this mean Sonos is going to launch an own service, or will it simply deepen its relationship with Apple, if not with another streaming service such as Spotify or Tidal?

The second point made in the blog post is voice control. Macfarlane point out the Amazon take on the field, describing the Echo line "first product to really showcase the power of voice control in the home," and as such Sonos will also be working on voice-enabled music "experiences" (note how such a term does not denote hardware-- an important point, that).

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"We know the future is one where paid streaming and voice control play significant roles," the CEO concludes. "We're committed to running a sustainable, profitable business so that we can fund innovation in these and other areas for decades to come." The message is clear-- expect less speaker products, if at all, from Sonos in the future.

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