

## China Takes on Echo With LingLong DingDong

Written by Marco Attard  
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Speakers equipped with voice-controlled personal assistants appear to be the next big thing, and Chinese vendors want a slice of the pie. One of these companies is LingLong, whose speaker bears the amusing monicker DingDong.



As the first product of Beijing LingLong, a joint venture between Chinese online retail giant JD.com and voice recognition specialist iFlytek, DingDong performs many of the functions provided by the likes of the Amazon Echo. It tells users news, weather and stock updates, answers questions, manages schedules, provides directions, and plays music and audiobooks. It also acts as a voice-based smart device controller, and includes a number of simple English lessons. The only difference, of course, is that it does so in either Mandarin or Cantonese.

Activating the DingDong requires one of three commands-- DingDong DingDong, Xiaowei Xiaowei (a girl's nickname) and BaiLing BaiLing (skylark). The actual hardware doesn't look too bad, with an interesting design featuring a circular top and a square bottom symbolising "tianyuan dìfang," the concept that "heaven is round, Earth is square," and it comes in red, white or black.

News of the DingDong hit West thanks to the admittedly ridiculous-sounding name, but it also represents a massive market in its home China-- according to Juniper Research [the Chinese smart home market is set to reach \\$22.8 billion by 2018,](#) and a 2014 survey by Chinese tech news portal Zol.com 54.9% of Chinese consumers are "very interested" in converting their homes into smart homes.

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For curious Chinese speakers, the DingDong is available now.

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