



# HCA Tech Note 712

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## New voice control quick reference (updated 15-Oct-23)

When you talk to your voice Assistant (Alexa or Google Assistant) you say the name the device you want to control. Suppose you want to add a new name, remove an existing name, or change a name. Here is a quick step-by-step for that.

Note: In this doc the Voice Assistant is Amazon Alexa, if you use Google Assistant the procedure is about the same, but you will look for the Google Assistant parts in Hubitat.

The term “Friendly name” is the name that you will use when you talk to the voice assistant. It doesn’t have to be the same name as the HCA object.

### **Step 1.**

Open an HCA Client and connect to the server.

### **Step 2.**

Click on the ribbon category “Interfaces”, then click on the “Configuration” button in the “External Assistants” panel. This opens a popup called “External Assistant”, which shows all programs and devices in the HCA design file. There are three columns, first one for HCA Object (the HCA name), a second column identified as “Enabled” yes or no, and a third column identified as “Friendly Name”.

In that “External Assistant” popup, select the HCA Object name (Program or Device) you wish to control using your voice assistant – first column of the table. Double-click on the “Friendly Name” column – the third column - and enter or change the friendly name and then finish that edit with the [enter] key. In the second column, double-click to change the enabled from no to yes, or yes to no. If “yes” then you can use the friendly name when talking to your voice assistant. If “no” then the voice assistant will not know about it.

When done, if you are adding a new friendly name, the External Assistant popup should show that device provided with a Friendly name and flagged with YES in the “Enabled” column.

### **Step 2 (alternative):**

You can use the steps above and the “External assistants” tool to add, remove, or change friendly names. However, there is an alternative and perhaps easier method: you can also open the properties of the object (i.e. the program or device in your HCA design file) you wish to modify and on the first tab of what you see – the “Name” tab – there is a field where you can enter the Friendly Name and the checkmark “option” so you can tick or un-tick the voice enabled checkbox and/or change the Friendly Name. Any change made here is reflected in the “External Assistant” tool which just shows all the friendly names in one place.

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## Step 3.

If you used the External Assistants tool, when you close that popup with OK, a message reminds you: “Don’t forget to use whatever method your assistant has to rediscover devices to incorporate your changes. Finish with the “I Understand” button.

## Step 4.

Click the SAVE button at the upper left corner of the HCA Client screen.

## Step 5.

Open your Hubitat interface from a browser using its IP address. In the menu click “Apps”. Within the Apps folder, there are two key apps to work with. The HCA App and the AMAZON ECHO SKILL app.

## Step 6.

Click on the HCA App Entry. Click the slider bar with the blue radio button to the far right of the slider, essentially enabling the option “GET DEVICES FROM HCA SERVER”. Then click “DONE”.

## Step 7.

Click on the APP “Amazon Echo Skill”. A grayish window pops open, allowing you to see all the devices Hubitat knows about listed in a grayish box. Click anywhere in that gray box, and you’ll see that same list of devices along with a checkbox next to each of them that enables or disables voice control. If the checkbox is ticked then that device will be exposed to Alexa for voice control.

If you are adding a new device for voice control, find it in this list and tick the box next to it. You can also remove devices from Alexa by locating it in the list and un-ticking the box next to it. Next, scroll down until you see the “Update” button in the lower right corner and click on it. Then scroll down again if necessary until you see the “Done” button at the lower right and click on that.

**Two important notes: First, do not forget to use the “Update” and the “Done” buttons or your work will be lost! Second, do not EVER do anything with the device named “HCA STATE CONNECTOR”. It must stay as it is and don’t tick the box next to it.**

## Step 8.

The final step may or may not be necessary. It seems sometimes Hubitat tells Alexa to discover the new or changed devices, but I have seen cases where it didn’t. Wait a minute and try your new device. If Alexa doesn’t know about it then tell Alexa to “Discover devices”.

##end##

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