

# What's Next with Amazon?

**Amazon started in 1994 as an online bookstore** shortly after the world wide web came into existence. After four years, it started the expansion into products other than books, and by 2011 Amazon offered online streaming. By 2015, it actually surpassed Walmart in market capitalization.

For those that have not heard, Amazon has announced a new service called “Amazon Key Service.” This service allows delivery people to enter your home and drop off your package(s) while you are away. Prime members can order a Cloud Cam and a compatible lock starting at \$249.99 to facilitate the new service. Apparently, Amazon will unlock your door for the delivery person then lock upon exiting. You will get an email alert letting you know that someone is in your house.

How many people across the U.S. can hold onto their cell phones all day and watch for alerts? More importantly, what if the delivery guy decides to take a glance around once inside. Are all of these delivery people going to go through a background check, and will Amazon take responsibility for possible losses — theft, damage or whatever?

What's wrong with leaving your packages on the front porch, steps or better yet with a neighbor? How much more are we willing to let Amazon into our homes and lives? We already have Alexa, Echo and other personal assistance devices to tell us what and when to do something. We have all these apps we're supposed to use and keep track of (including an abundance of unique passwords — there's an app for managing them too). Can you afford to sit at work most of the day and monitor all the different apps so you'll know when you get an alert? Tough to do whatever it is your employer is paying you to do.

Historically, every time we do something new, someone is ready to beat the system and take advantage of the opportunity. Trains come into existence in the 1800s and BAM! we have train robbers. Why on earth would anyone be surprised that we have hackers? We even have blackmailers and kidnapers of our data — hence the Uber bungle. Imagine how likely it will be for this new Amazon service to be hijacked by someone who wants easy entry into our homes.

## WHAT'S NEXT?

**Pharmaceuticals.** Are agricultural chemicals far behind? If Amazon figures out how to do the pharmaceuticals it may have

a benefit in reducing some of the ridiculous pricing of some products. It also opens up another way to steal drugs that we so readily abuse in the U.S.

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**Drones and blimps.** These are mentioned as ways to handle the goods that Amazon is selling and needs to deliver in a cost-effective and very fast way. Want blimps overhead? Supposedly these blimps will be the inventory unit and fly and hover 1,000 to 1,500 feet above ground and the drones, which have a 400-foot maximum flying height, will be the delivery method. Not sure how this will work since there is a flying height difference between the two. Each drone will have to be registered with the FAA; you can have multiple drones under one registration number but there is a limit. The blimps will either be manned by a pilot or unmanned. Everyone at Amazon who will be involved in the flying drone process will have to get their “Remote Pilot Certification,” which is the FAA Part 107 Exam, current cost \$150. The company cannot get the certification for all of its employees; this is an individual certification.

Under current FAA guidelines, two people are required to fly a drone (pilot and visual aid person within line of sight of pilot). As you can imagine this no doubt gets very costly and is yet another way to be monitored. In case you think we'll be safe, laws change at the blink of an eye!

**China and Alibaba.** Jack Ma mentioned on CNBC in December that Amazon is more or less a nonentity in China. We can only hope that somebody can give Amazon a run for their money in our market. Choice is always better than having only one way to do anything.

Will the rapid emergence of Amazon as the market leader stop small startups from launching at all? The need to meet a specific market size may leave many new ideas out in the cold. Concentrating so much money/power in one company makes it (and us) susceptible to a multitude of issues. Are you ready to hand over all of your choices for the ease of using Amazon? Hopefully, Amazon will remember once in awhile that nobody is too big to fail. [gpn](#)



*Chase Agricultural Consulting, LLC was formed in 2011 by Ann (A.R.) Chase and Mike Zemke. Ann has more than 35 years experience in research, diagnostics and practical consulting in plant pathology. She has been retired from the University of Florida since 1994 but remains on staff as a Professor Emeritus. Mike holds an Associate of Applied Science in manufacturing drafting and started his education in horticulture when he and Ann were married in 1995. He specializes in communications of all sorts within the industry.*