

# My New iPhone4s

## How Serious is Siri?



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I finally got my new iPhone4s and as excited as a kid on Christmas day I went about setting the whole thing up so I could start trying out Siri; the little artificial intelligence (A.I.) “virtual assistant” that has been pumped in the media as the biggest industry game changer since the mouse.

Siri (if you have been hiding in a literal cave lately) is the first A.I. fully integrated with a mobile phone user interface and is able to understand and learn from very naturally spoken voice commands. It is supposed to change the way we think about and do quite a few things with our mobile phones and the internet not to mention our lives. Ultimately, Siri could become the link between people and the internet of things. Sounds great but personally, I am not holding my breath until Siri is able to keep my fridge full- You see, I have detected a few flaws.....

I suppose my relationship with Siri is just beginning so the complexities will have to reveal themselves over time. We all agree there is huge potential but for now, well – I won’t go into huge detail here, but instead, I will let Siri speak for herself.

The following is a transcript of an actual (virtual) conversation:

Me: Hi Siri.  
Siri: Hi Sir Paul.

*(Actually, I told her to say that. I like the sound of it.)*

Me: How are you?  
Siri: I didn’t quite get that.

Me: How are you doing?  
Siri: I am well, thank you.

Me: Can you do something for me?  
Siri: I didn’t quite get DiGuisseppi for me.

Me: Will you do something for me?  
Siri: I can’t find “Will” in your contacts.

Me: Ok, forget it.  
Siri: I don’t understand “OK forget it”.

Me: Do I have any appointments today?  
Siri: You have no appointments in your calendar for



today.

*(This is a lie, I have lots of appointments today, I just haven't synced her up with my outlook yet.)*

Me: What time is it?

Siri: It is 14:45. *(this was actually true at the time)*

Me: Where am I?

Siri: Sorry Sir Paul, I am unable to provide maps and directions for the Netherlands.

Me: Where can you provide locations and directions for?

Siri: Where would you like to go?

Me: New York.

Siri: Here are directions to New York City.

*(At this point, Google maps shows me some random place in Manhattan near the corner of Broadway and Chambers Street and it tells me that driving directions "could not be found between these locations"; meaning between where and where I don't know.)*

Me: OK, where is Amsterdam?

Siri: Sorry Sir Paul, I can't provide maps and directions in the Netherlands.

Me: How far is it between Amsterdam and New York?

Siri: Sorry Sir Paul, I can only get directions starting from your current location.

Me: Ok then, where do you think I am?

Siri: Sorry Sir Paul, I can't provide maps and directions in the Netherlands.

Me: How far is it between the Earth and the Moon?

Siri: Let me check on that. I found this for you... *(361315 km is displayed on my screen, sounds about right.)*

Me: OK send a text to my wife.

Siri: OK, I can send a text to your wife for you... what would you like it to say?

Me: "Looks like I'll be home late for dinner honey."

Siri: I updated your message. Ready to send it?

Me: OK

Siri: OK, I'll send it.

*(End of conversation)*

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*Siri -  
"I didn't quite get that."*



Siri -  
*"Ever so Sorry  
 Sir Paul, I am  
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/// I guess you see the biggest problem here is that for some unfathomable reason, Apple has released the iPhone4s with the most advanced software in the world and it can't even tell me where I am! ///

advanced software in the world and it can't even tell me where I am! What on earth are they thinking? No ability to "provide maps and directions in the Netherlands"?!? This, to me, is a big disappointment and it shows just how stubborn Apple is being when it comes to avoiding using anything that has to do with Google. The stupid thing is that my phone definitely knows where I am, Siri just won't tell me. This is almost unbelievable because if I simply open Google maps (the app it built into the phone, the icon is right there), there I am - the little blue pulsating dot. There are a few things Siri is simply not able to do that it should and here are a few examples:

Me: Open Google Maps  
 Siri: Ever so Sorry Sir Paul, I am not allowed to do that

Me: Can you open Safari?  
 Siri: I can't open that for you Sir Paul,

Me: Can you open an application?  
 Siri: I don't understand "Can you open an application?"

Me: Search for Amsterdam  
 Siri: Searching for Amsterdam

*(Siri opens Safari and Yahoo to find normal search results for "Amsterdam".)*

OK. So, the fact of the matter is that there are workarounds. It just takes a bit of getting used to. If you are very, very specific you might just get what you want; for instance:

Me: Google "Amsterdam Google Maps"  
 Siri: Searching for Amsterdam Google Maps

*(Sarfai opens, Google opens, searches for "Amsterdam Google maps" and displays a map of Amsterdam in the top of the results. When I touch the map Google maps opens an there I am the pulsating little blue dot right by the Heineken Museum.)*

Result! So here are a few clues. If you want to search Google, say "Google" don't just say search or you'll get Yahoo but there are a few really frustrating road blocks:

Me: Search for Restaurants in Amsterdam  
 Siri: Sorry Sir Paul, I cannot search for restaurants in the Netherlands.

Siri won't even do the search in Yahoo, BUT, if you say-

Me: Search Google for restaurants in Amsterdam  
 Siri: Searching for "restaurants in Amsterdam."

OK, enough said. I have been pretty tough on Siri (Apple actually deserves some constructive criticism on this one) but the fact of the matter is that Siri



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is very, very good at certain things; things that it is allowed to do, set up to do. Now I will give a few examples of what it does very, very well on top of its incredibly fast and accurate ability to recognize and understand what I say in a normal tone of voice.

- Set an alarm
- Make an appointment
- Alert me of an appointment
- Tell me the time
- Tell me the weather
- Perform calculations (even quite advanced)
- Perform currency conversion
- Tell me about a movie
- Send a text
- Read a text
- Send an e-mail (as long as your e-mail is set up)
- Spell words
- Provide definitions of words
- Take notes
- Set a reminder
- Play music (as long as there is music in your library)

In short, Siri is great at task commands that have just about anything to do with managing your calendar and contacts. It is also very good at answering very specific questions that have to do with information it gets from its partner Wolfram. This is where it gets answers for calculations, movies, word spellings and definitions. You can even ask a "what is..." question and it will most likely give you a summery encyclopedia excerpt including pictures provided by Wolfram.

As time goes by, I can definitely see Siri being very effective and, if it really learns, it could change the way we relate to and rely on our phones. In the mean time I would really like to see Apple enable Siri to at least **"provide maps and directions in the Netherlands"**, please!



*Siri -*  
"Sorry Sir Paul, I can't provide maps and directions in the Netherlands."



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Schrijf je in voor de nieuwsbrief