

Brussels, 4 June 2018



Discover virtual assistant Alexa and The Virtual Space at KBC

Get involved in a European first

As from the end of June, KBC clients with access to virtual assistant Alexa will also be able to check the balances on their accounts using this technology.

With this innovation, KBC will become the first bank in Europe to offer clients the option of using speech technology to do their banking.

From today on, everyone can use The Virtual Space, a brand-new concept that illustrates the possibilities of 3D technology for the financial sector. A genuine virtual reality version will be unveiled later this year.

Erik Luts, Chief Innovation Officer at KBC Group, provides more information on these two pilot projects: *'KBC is looking to offer its clients a unique bank-insurance experience. Clients choose whichever channel they prefer, be it the bricks-and-mortar branch or agency, their smartphone, the website, KBC Live or our apps. Human contact plays a crucial role, but will be backed up with digital possibilities that include face-to-face contact, supported by robot advice like chatbots, as in the K'Ching app in Belgium.*

Technological innovations offer exciting new opportunities. At KBC, we want our clients to benefit fully from such opportunities that have already appeared in other sectors and to enjoy even more user convenience.

That's why we're starting these two trials and making them open to both clients and non-clients. By doing so, we can better understand the current zeitgeist, find out what clients want today, how they deal with new technology and how we can prepare ourselves in advance for the 'day-after-tomorrow'. We will draw the necessary conclusions from these trials and then decide where and how we will invest in the future.

By adopting a gradual but decisive approach, we will ensure that KBC keeps up with technological developments and makes full use of the opportunities arising from them. It is even more important that we do everything in our power to anticipate and respond proactively to the fast-changing behaviour and expectations of our clients. This will enable us to remain a forward-thinking and reliable partner for our clients, who are looking for convenience and ease-of-use, on the spot, wherever and whenever they want. "

Ask Alexa how much is on your current account

Alexa, a virtual assistant is being used in increasingly more homes. This assistant (available in an English and German-language version only) can do much more than just play music. Alexa incorporates a voice control system that you can use to ask all sorts of questions or to give instructions. The device can also be connected to other appliances/equipment (including domestic appliances, lighting systems, cameras, thermostats and vehicles), with users having the ability to activate or deactivate certain things (such as switching lights off or on). This technology is expected to become more popular with clients and consumers in the future and, therefore, will herald another change in client behaviour.

Since the end of May, KBC employees who own an Amazon Echo smart speaker have been able to take part in trials. They can use Alexa to check the balance on their current accounts.

At present, 'checking account balances' is the most frequently used function in KBC Mobile (for smartphone banking) and KBC Touch (tablet/desktop banking) and requires just a brief interaction. That's why this function is ideal for the trial that KBC is now setting up. At the end of June, also KBC clients will be given the opportunity to use Alexa to check their account balances.

KBC banking clients who are interested in taking part in the trials can now register at www.kbc.be/Alexa.

How does it work?

When the client registers with Amazon, a unique link is created between Amazon, the client and KBC. Since Alexa is not a 'personal device', anybody can gain access to its service options. Consequently, clients can choose to additionally secure the balance-checking feature by means of a PIN. During the trial phase for KBC employees, registration expires after 24 hours, but employees are able to register again afterwards.

Starting at the end of June, KBC clients will be given the capability to manage their authorisation or permission themselves in KBC Mobile and KBC Touch, and the period can be extended to 90 days.

Clients are free to discontinue the balance-checking option at any time.

Do your banking from now on in The Virtual Space at KBC

The Virtual Space is a brand-new concept that has been developed with 3D technology. Using software from the gaming industry (based on the Unreal4 Engine), a virtual world is created where products, services and support are experienced in a completely new way.

The 3D version of The Virtual Space at KBC can now be downloaded (2GB) to desktops by sending an e-mail to thevirtualspace@kbc.be. More information is also available at www.kbc.be/thevirtualspace.

Experiences and feedback regarding The Virtual Space can be shared through a Facebook group (or via the mailbox referred to above).

The free platform can be accessed by everyone, including non-clients.

KBC is starting off with an English-language version, but Dutch and French-language versions will be launched later this year.

Visiting The Virtual Space at KBC

The Virtual Space environment currently comprises a number of zones that provide access to banking apps (such as KBC Touch and Card Stop) and to other channels at KBC (including KBC Live, KBC.be and chat facilities). You can also watch information and training videos and learn about financial products or services using gamification techniques ('learn as you play').

Visitors enter The Virtual Space through **the lobby**. They then receive a tutorial, which is like a guide or road map for The Virtual Space, before taking the lift down to the branch environment. They can go to **The Vault**, where they can log in to KBC Touch, check account balances, carry out money transfers and much more besides (with or without the Mobile Sign app or a card reader).

In **the Support Area**, they will receive assistance with any questions of a technical nature (having a bank card blocked via Card Stop, for instance), be put through to KBC Live if they have a product-related question or be able to make an appointment with someone at KBC. In **the Experience Zone**, visitors can do a number of things at present, including improving their knowledge of cyber security by means of a 'quest'. They also have the freedom to discover and make use of the underground **Training Center**. Lastly, they can get up to speed with the campaigns that KBC is running in **the Advertising Area**.



Visitors to each zone can opt to reach a number of targets and in the process pick up points to move up to the next level, just like in a computer game. The platform also remembers your most recent position, your level and XP points.

Get [here](#) an idea of how it looks and feels.

Come and get involved in a European first

The Virtual Space at KBC is in the experimental phase (in technical terms, the vspace is still in the pre-alpha stage) and has yet to be tested on all hardware. The concept is in full development at KBC (using the Unreal4 Engine), with the suggestions, ideas and developments put forward by the users being taken on board. There is no shortage of possibilities, with themes, quests, competitions and challenges just some of them.

Through this experiment, KBC wants to hear about the visitor experience and what visitors are after. At the same time, it also wants to gain experience with this channel, this new way to communicate, both visually and in terms of content.

The Virtual Space helps familiarise visitors with a number of financial matters (financial education) in a fun and relaxing way. However, the platform can be expanded to include any number of possibilities. The experiment started by KBC should enable it to find out what today's clients want and expect, and how they deal with new technology. In the Facebook group established for this purpose, members will be asked about how The Virtual Space experience can be taken to a different level.

The findings will be used to draw the necessary conclusions and to identify where further investment is required.

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/189574251767841/> or by e-mail: thevirtualspace@kbc.be

KBC is also launching a number of new features that will further enhance the client experience. Find out more in the press release 'Instant client with KBC/CBC Mobile and multi-bank transfers from KBC/CBC multi-banking'.

KBC Group NV

Havenlaan 2 – 1080 Brussels
Viviane Huybrecht
General Manager of Corporate Communication/
KBC Group Spokesperson
Tel.: + 32 2 429 85 45

Press Office
Tel. + 32 2 429 65 01 Stef Leunens
Tel. + 32 2 429 29 15 Ilse De Muyer

E-mail: pressofficekbc@kbc.be

Check this document's authenticity [here](#)

KBC press releases are available at
www.kbc.com

Follow us on www.twitter.com/kbc_group

Stay up-to-date on all innovative solutions
at <https://www.kbc.com/en/innovation>
