

3 Ways IoT Improves Life at Home, on the Run, and on the Road

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The Internet of Things - writ large - is a network of interconnected objects that collect and track data. This growing network of stuff impacts our lives far more than we realize. It takes everyday objects, like cars and home appliances, and turns them into intelligent, data-driven machines. From the home to fitness to travel, IoT embraces the connectivity brought about by the Internet to introduce innovative technology and smart-devices into our everyday lives.

IoT Home Automation

Whirlpool, a home appliance manufacturer, is embracing the connectivity of the Internet of Things by giving consumers the opportunity to connect their home appliances to the Internet. Whirlpool has released smart washers and dryers equipped with built-in Amazon Dash, a wifi enabled product button serving over a 100 brands to date. Dash monitors detergent levels, and will notify users when they are running low. This partnership with Amazon allows customers to easily order needed supplies from their phone, as soon as they are prompted. This means no more forgetting to pick up laundry detergent at the store - you can simply order with the click of a button, when your washing machine tells you to.

Some Whirlpool washing machines are equipped to connect with Nest, the smart home thermostat. Nest can tell the washing machine to delay a cycle until a period of high energy demand has passed, saving homeowners money on their energy bill. The washing machine and the thermostat can connect to each other, and adjust wash cycles and temperature accordingly, taking work away from the homeowners and streamlining efficiency through machine communication, while providing money saving benefits to today's smart-homeowners.

These advancements are only the beginning for Whirlpool's IoT enabled appliances, as the company recently announced a new partnership with IBM. In this partnership, Whirlpool plans to connect home appliances with IBM Watson, a cognitive computing system, to increase their technological capabilities. For the homeowner, this means that more appliances will become connected by the same system. This will promote interaction between different appliances, allowing them to work together and increase their efficiency by saving water and energy.

IoT Powered Fitness

Under Armour is bringing the Internet of Things to fitness with the UA Connected Fitness platform. In 2015, the company acquired MyFitnessPal and Endomondo. The apps were then combined with UA Record to create the UA Connected Fitness Platform, which is now a top health tracking service. The platform allows users to track their health and fitness data through a wearable fitness band, a heart rate monitor, and a smart scale. The platform integrates many different technologies into one platform for easy viewing and interpretation.

Ralph Lauren, a luxury clothing company, has taken the idea of wearables in another direction with their Polo Tech Shirt. The genius of the shirt is that it functions as a wearable; It captures the wearer's heart rate, breathing, and calories burned while they exercise and records them in a special data-tracking app. Instead of having to remember their fitness wearable, exercise enthusiasts can incorporate fitness-tracking technology directly into their clothing.

IoT Improved Travel

Zipcar, a car sharing program, has incorporated the connectivity of the Internet of Things directly into their everyday customer experience. Zipcar members have a smart card, called the Zipcard, that authenticates their identity and allows them to unlock their reserved rental car. The company can then use the Zipcard to track the location and distance travelled by the user. Car2go, a one-way car rental company, expands the IoT in their business practices by allowing user's smartphones to function as their identification card. The use of smart technology by car sharing companies makes it easier for renters to access cars, while allowing companies to track and collect customer data through smart objects.

The Internet of Things has also expanded into hotels. Hilton Worldwide, an international collection of hotels and resorts, is implementing new technology that allows guests to check in and select their rooms, all on their smartphones. This innovation makes check in much quicker now that guests can control it from their mobile devices. Some hotels have developed this idea even further and now allow guests to use their smartphones as the key to their hotel room. This is a great convenience for travelers who no longer have to worry about keeping track of their hotel key, everything can be controlled from their mobile phone.

Improving User Experience

The advent of the Internet of Things has brought convenience to many areas of our lives. Innovative companies are using the Internet of Things to increase the connectivity between smart objects and improve the lives of the people that use them. This allows for greater efficiency in the home, better fitness statistics for athletes, and increased convenience for travelers. With all of these developments, the Internet of Things is starting to affect our real lives, everyday, in a big way.

