

A kind of happiness pill

It is considered to be a miracle for an easier life: The Internet of Things. But the online networking of objects struggles on a basic problem: It fights against the lack of convincing ideas.

It is more sensitive than some life partner. When warm white light on the breakfast table in the morning and a rather dimmed variant in the afternoon is needed in the common apartment, these desires are automatically fulfilled. "Fluxo" is the name of the attentive lamp by the Viennese Start-up Luke Roberts, which learns from user behavior. This brightness is controlled by built-in motion sensors, the light switch and Bluetooth. However, those who are still waiting to switch on the television for the Champions League game due to so much empathy are in the wrong film. Like everything else that thinks, the lamp has its limits. Fans of furnishing minimalism may seem tantalized by the fact that with a single object, several different moods can be conjured up in their living area. The potential for cunning products is, however, far from being exhausted. "Smart products that significantly improve the consumer's livelihood have a great future," says Luke-Roberts co-founder Robert Kopka. Chances of career in the human zone have by no means only lamps. When little boring objects suddenly grow in intelligence it is because of the concept of the „Internet of Things“. The idea sounds like a fantasy film: objects from coffee machine to toothbrush and flower pot are equipped with chips as well as sensors and made ready for online communication. In the supernetwork, services are ready to raise the convenience factor to an unimagined level.

The makers also radiate a lot of idealism: "We want to improve the quality of life of people and simplify their everyday life. The key is in this networking," the motivating credo of Volkmar Denner, head of the German Bosch group. At the "Consumer Electronics Show 2016" trade fair in Las Vegas, Denner presented a striking example of the trip to the future. There, the networked car communicated via its navigation system with the smart house and the oven was ready for the Salamipizza on arrival. If this pastry is a problem for the stomach, the pill box by the US newcomer AdhereTech could join the game: Always think of swallowing! The sensors attached to the box immediately register whether the drug contained in it has even been taken. If the patient has forgot about it, an SMS or a flashing light signal will remind him. The software inquires reasons for negligence and sends the result to the doctor, who can react to the habits of the patient. But do you really want something like this?

For founders who are in a goldrush mood in the face of the new possibilities, such scenarios are almost like a happiness pill. Gartner Austria, an analyst of global technology trends and developments, knows: According to studies, "IoT" ("Internet of Things") is said to generate around 309 billion euros in revenue in 2020 worldwide. Up to this point, the new technosphere, according to Gartner's forecast, will consist of some 26 billion connected objects. However, the euphoria of companies or founders is currently being dampened by reality. The lauded web rocket is a source of start-up problems. "The development is only at the beginning, according to estimates, today 99 percent of things are not connected," emphasizes Achim Kaspar, general manager of the network specialist Cisco Austria, which illustrates the situation with portable chips. "In Western Europe, there will be around 127.6 million wearables, such as smart watches, by 2020, of which only 6.6 million will have a mobile connection." It remains to be seen whether the target group will be annoyed. In

addition, the consumer is somewhat saturated with loud messages about techno tools that turn everything upside down. What would count is appreciable added value. However, too few convincing consumer applications within the Internet of Things hinder the development towards the mass market, as the consultancy Deloitte likes to point out. In 2000 first attempts failed already: A refrigerator which was celebrated as a milestone for convenience, which could determine online, which products is running out, only reckoned icy reactions.

Today, experts of the matter are discovering many other efforts, such as "smart gardening", but they raise questions. A mowing robot, which determines the best route to cut the lawn via smartphone or tablet, barely makes garden owners smile. Most people do just that without having to use an expensive machine. The experimentation phase, garnished with shrill ideas, still goes in a funny way. From the US company, Double Robotics, comes a robot that allows people who are absent to attend meetings, lectures or the aunts birthday. Directed via tablet and internet, these representative zaps through the rooms and transmits the impressions into the whole world via camera. Even if such products should find customers, the dark clouds, which generally float above the Internet of Things, continue to be present. A meticulously engineered life usually quickly causes diffuse fears of total surveillance and the final chord for all privacy. When chips and sensors continuously filter personal information, secret services, data collectors and hackers will be delighted sensitive people warn about a network of spying. Increasingly, such visions can't be dismissed as more than sub paranoia by persons who have seen „The X Files“ on television too often. Gartner expects a profitable black market of some five billion euros for counterfeit sensors or video data until 2020, which provides questionable contemporaries with insights into the existence of potential victims. But the apologists of the new glory are already tinkering with appeasement formulas: The providers of products and services only have to strive for solutions. And the IT industry is eager to hear such words. After all, an additional source of income is emerging. "The Internet of Things poses new security requirements," said Dieter Steiner, Head of Security Service Provider SSP Europe. "Vulnerabilities are often discovered too late in projects, ultimately leading to serious problem areas.

Therefore, security must not be considered as a separate aspect, but needs to be integrated into the overall concept." Such weaknesses do not burden all strategists. For the time being, the new technology generates sufficient stress. "Even though the Internet of Things has great potential, it is being used by less than ten percent of the largest corporations", says Bernd Bugelnig, CEO of consultancy company Capgemini Austria. "That's because of the complexity, costs increase quickly when products are being implemented." It takes not only development time, but also a lot of money, which slows down many companies. "However, some big players realize the attack on the still smooth parquet. In the networked Panasonic household, for example, the kitchen becomes a high-tech center, where camera sensors closely monitor all events. The personal kitchen screen on the workspace collects vital data from the respective "cook". He or she can indicate whether intolerance is present, or a diet is announced or not. Based on the data, the smart, virtual kitchen team provides simple tips for the meal. Even the idea of unappetizing food residues won't spoil anyone appetite in the new net hemisphere history, granted the recycling bins have been developed by evolaris, the Austro-Competencecenter for mobile communication.

The prototype has ultrasonic sensors that detect the level and report it to the server. The respective disposal specialists can then optimize their route planning. "This range of intelligent things will be successively greater," says evolaris CEO Christian Kittl who gives hope to all those who can't wait for an optimized machine network anymore. Some are already benefiting from the digital glory, documents the app of a car manufacturer, which checks the condition of the car and indicates necessary maintenance work. " In the beginning, this was seen as a sales knit and simply ignored, "says Capgemini boss Bugelnig." But after warning signals in the board computer are illuminated and the car actually broke, drivers quickly started to take these notes seriously. "

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