HOW WILL THE INTERNET OF THINGS AFFECT THE WAY WE INTERACT WITH OUR FUTURE HOMES?

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Jason Morjaria, founder of Commusoft, explains how the internet of things (iOT) can play a part in digitising the custom build process…

The internet has come along way in the last 10 years. Services like Gmail, Amazon and Facebook, to name a few, have shaped the way we communicate, buy things and socialise. It therefore seems inevitable that our homes might adopt some of this impressive technology.

The internet of things is an idea that not just computers, phones, tablets and watches can connect to the internet, but objects you may have never considered. Thermostats, coffee machines, fridges, cookers and basically anything else in your home could, in theory, be connected to the internet one day.

With companies like Nest by Google leading the way with iOT in the home, it's not going to be long before our homes are in constant communication with us via the internet.

While most people focus on how this benefits the homeowner and how iOT can be used to provide us with a more comfortable lifestyle, not many people talk about how **developers** and **builders** could use the technology to provide their end customers with a more unique experience, adding additional value to their service.

Commusoft have been part of a recent research project funded by the Technology Strategy Board (TSB) with the goal of digitising the custom build market. While this is a broad subject, Commusoft's main focus has been looking at how iOT plays a part in the digitisation of the building process.

While Commusoft's primary offering is job management software for field force engineers, it has been researching and experimenting with iOT under the brand Oprillo for the last three years. While the goal of this TSB project was to provide the project partners with iOT data from devices like Nest Thermostat, Philips Hue Lighting etc, Commusoft has been also looking at how contractors and developers could use iOT to service and maintain assets in the field.

HOW DOES THE IOT WORK FOR CUSTOM BUILD?

Engineers fit assets like boilers and air-conditioning systems in houses and commercial buildings. These assets are internet connected and feed information in real-time back to Commusoft's job management system.

Contractors can see diagnostic and usage information about that asset, giving them better insights into when an appliance may need servicing and repairing. This idea of pro-active maintenance is a brand new concept for most contractors as they often only are notified about a problem once an asset has broken down.

While this may seem a little creepy for domestic homeowners, it's perfectly suited to commercial properties where contractors have strict SLA's to adhere to and businesses lose thousands of pounds an hour when assets are not operating correctly – especially for assets like plant machinery.

iOT is an ever expanding industry and one we've not fully explored the potential of, but I'm certain that we'll be seeing more and more internet connected devices make it into our home and offices over the next five years.