



Could it be the Golden Years for the Internet of Things?

Written by Leon Rudd, director of integrated healthcare at Appello,

Following the recent recommendations of the Housing and Care for Older People All Party Parliamentary Group's HAPPI3 report, 'Housing our Ageing Population: Positive Ideas', there's a lot of excitement around its findings and what they might mean for our older citizens.

Appello, a leading provider of technology enabled care services, was a key consulted party to the report, and we're certain the retirement market and its new models of housing is poised to bring theory to practice for the Internet of Things (IoT) through the use of digital solutions. What are the golden years for our older population is fast becoming the golden age for the IoT, too.

The benefits are clear, for both providers and residents, from vastly improved response times to telecare monitoring centres, insight into data and activity to provide intelligent care, costs savings, as well as improved trust and wellbeing amongst residents. However, there are challenges that need to be addressed to take full advantage of the IoT in upgrading antiquated analogue call systems.

The move from analogue to digital or IP systems is the first step in transforming the home. To meet rising customer expectations the fundamental piece around improved connectivity should be a top priority in order to fully realise the benefits of the connected home.

It's 2016 and in just four years, the penetration of smart, connected devices, or 'things' is expected to be, for the majority, a domestic success. We don't think there's any larger group more open and in need of the huge benefits these devices could make than the post-60s.

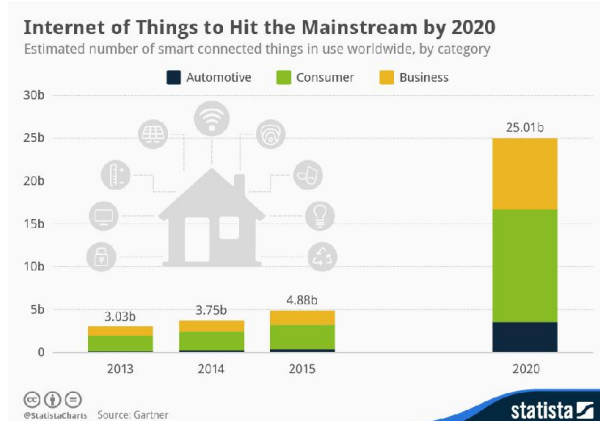


Fig 1. "Internet of Things to Hit the Mainstream by 2020" (2014)

Appello believes that, following the HAPPI3 report, which urges the Government to assist with the provision of suitable 'later' homes rather than just focus on 'starter' homes, adds momentum to the market's resolution to design a built environment for older consumers which suits not just their physical needs, but their complex emotional ones too.

Leaving a long-standing family home and settling into a new place can be terrifically traumatic for an older adult. The management of an unfamiliar home and environment is daunting. Smart homes, or homes which alleviate that burden with the consent and control of the resident, will diffuse anxiety and provide both resident and health and social care teams observations of daily living that will keep the later years golden and relaxed.

From sensors to monitor fluid intake and exercise patterns, to tablet dispensers that help with medication reminders, the IoT is going to prove its use and offer competitive returns on investment in the retirement housing market. The HAPPI3 report provides our industry with some excellent, collective, smart thinking on the possibilities. It's available to download in full here: www.housinglin.org.uk/HAPPI3/.

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