

MOBILE

Big brands embrace convergence of IoT, wearables with commerce

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Longchamp Autumn 2015 campaign

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One of the trends to emerge so far this year is the growing number of opportunities to drive sales from a myriad of smart devices in the home and elsewhere.

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MasterCard and Amazon were two big presences at the Consumer Electronics Show last week as savvy brands race to grab a piece of the emerging opportunity to make it easy for consumers to repurchase everyday items from smart devices in their homes. Savvy retailers such as Target were also on hand in recognition of the growing demand from consumers for enhancing their homes with technology.

"I would point to the intersection of IoT and commerce as a major CES trend that will unfold more throughout the year," said Jordan McKee, senior analyst of mobile payments at [451 Research](#). "MasterCard's connected fridge partnership with Samsung as well as its partnerships with wearables vendors such as Moov show that commerce and connectivity are becoming inextricably intertwined.

"Payments companies are excited by IoT because they see it as an opportunity to turn devices and objects into new commerce endpoints," he said.

High-tech everyday shopping

The Groceries by MasterCard program will provide users with the ability to purchase food items and have them delivered to their homes directly from ShopRite and FreshDirect. Samsung's smart fridge will learn the family's eating habits over time and provide suggestions based on this information.

MasterCard also announced a new partnership with Coin to bring MasterCard payments to a wide array of fitness bands, smart watches and other wearable devices. The goal is to make it easier for the growing array of smart devices to be able to add payment capabilities. Initial partners include Atlas Wearables, Moov, a fitness device, and Omate, which approaches wearables from the fashion angle.

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"It's important to view IoT partnerships such as the one between MasterCard and Samsung not in a vacuum, but as part of an ecosystem of connected 'things,'" Mr. McKee said. "The value of these relationships can be found in the sum of the parts enabling commerce to occur anytime, anywhere, across any connected device or object.

"This opportunity remains nascent, however, and will take time to deliver in a meaningful way," he said.

Personal assistant

Amazon's cloud-based voice assistant, Alexa, was on display, having moved beyond its original deployment inside the Echo speak and into a number of products, including home security cameras, lighting systems and Ford Vehicles.

Amazon is also reportedly working on a less-expensive version of Echo that would enable users to activate Alexa and repurchase items with a push of a button.

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Target had a team of executives at CES exploring IoT and other technologies.

"Customization and personalization are coming faster than ever in the technology world," said Scott Nygaard, senior vice president of hardlines at Target in a blog post commenting on [CES](#).

"Whether it's personalized 3D-printed headphones, health and wellness products with personal diagnostics, or other connected app-based products including TVs, consumers will be able to customize their lives," he said.

"And if we think our phones are important today, it will soon be the personal remote control for our entire lives."

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