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AT&T: We'll connect everything you own and everywhere you go



By **Roger Cheng**
 January 5, 2016 6:35 PM



This article, [AT&T: We'll connect everything you own and everywhere you go](#), originally appeared on [CNET.com](#).

AT&T once used the Consumer Electronics Show here in Las Vegas to show off its newest phones or tout its spiffed-up wireless network.

This year, it's all about cars, glucose monitors and smart cities.

The Dallas-based telecom giant spent most of its presentation to developers Tuesday chatting up the potential of reaching its 132 million wireless customers and 45 million video customers.

The change in tone speaks to how AT&T plans to be a part of your new, more connected life. It's no longer enough to power your mobile phone or home DSL connection. The carrier wants to be the link that connects your car, the health monitors and even your city's traffic lights.



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Glenn Lurie, CEO of AT&T's mobility business, talks about the opportunity to connect cities to smart services.

Claudia Cruz/CNET

"This is a new AT&T," Ralph de la Vega, CEO of AT&T Mobile and Business Solutions, said in his keynote address.

The push is part of this Internet of Things trend you might have heard about. The idea is that every device -- whether it's a refrigerator or glucose monitor -- talks to other devices so they can better serve you. And AT&T wants to become the bridge between all these things.

There's a reason why every company is so hot to jump on IoT. The Consumer Technology Association said the category [will account for \\$287 billion in retail sales this year](#), which explains why heavy hitters such as Samsung Electronics are talking loudly about some smart thing or another.

These connected things are showing up everywhere, including coolers built by Red Bull that enable the company to monitor things like location and temperature. Red Bull plans to use AT&T's tech to connect 200,000 coolers in the US alone.

The shift is also a reflection that AT&T's more traditional businesses just aren't growing that quickly anymore. In the last quarter, it [lost 333,000 phone customers who pay at the end of the month](#), a signal that competition is taking a toll.

AT&T, the No. 2 wireless carrier in the US, said it remains committed to the phone business, but wants to pursue new opportunities.

"It's more a reflection of where we see velocity is occurring," Chris Penrose, head of AT&T's Internet of Things business, said in an interview ahead of the presentation. "More and more things will continue to be connected."

Thinking big

While many companies are looking at connecting light bulbs or refrigerators, AT&T is taking a more holistic approach by looking at the smart city as its next opportunity. The company is working with a host of partners -- including Cisco Systems, Ericsson, Deloitte, General Electric, IBM, Intel and Qualcomm -- to figure out ways to add smarts to city infrastructure like streetlights and traffic signals.

Dallas, Atlanta and Chicago will be the three "spotlight cities" where AT&T will begin its smart-city push. Theoretically, this could mean fewer traffic jams and better air quality, for example.

"It will simply make lives better," said Glenn Lurie, CEO of AT&T's mobility unit.

Connecting Ford

AT&T also said it plans to connect more than 10 million Ford cars



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by 2020, expanding on an earlier deal to offer cellular network capabilities to select Ford vehicles.

The carrier is banking on consumer demand for Wi-Fi hotspots on wheels, cellular-powered navigation and remote maintenance checks.

AT&T will specifically power Ford Sync Connect, which will allow you to remotely lock your car doors or start your car and view vehicle information like fuel and battery level or tire pressure.

A healthy push

AT&T also said it would create a research foundry in the Texas Medical Center Innovation Institute in Houston, with the goal of getting new health services to market, faster.

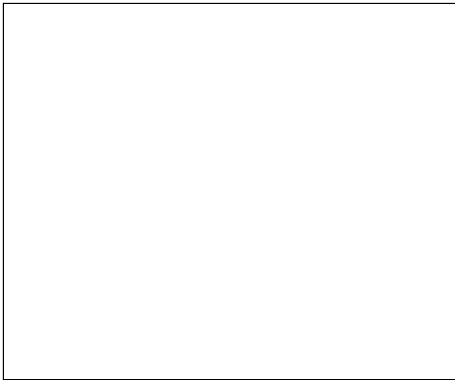
One example? The YOFiMeter, a connected glucose meter that will allow diabetics to wirelessly transmit their blood sugar levels and other biometric data to their physicians.

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