

**Public Policy Salon**

*Enriching Washington's Public Policy Life • Making World Affairs Our Business*

*Innovation of Things*

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## Let's Make America's Things Smarter

**Kathy Kemper**

*Founder and CEO, Institute for Education*

Posted: The Huffington Post – 06/06/2014

**T**he Internet has become boring. It's basically e-mail, Facebook, and the three other websites we visit regularly: just a bunch of information shot from one computer to the next. Yawn.

But imagine a world where it wasn't just computers exchanging information, but everything: cars, air conditioners, jet engines, blood pressure cuffs, coffeemakers, televisions... everything! You'd have not just an Internet of computers, but an Internet of Things (IoT), sharing data and maybe even responding to it. Silicon Valley is super amped to get IoT out of their brains and into your life.

We're already moving toward "smart homes" in which appliances and security systems are connected to the Internet. Your fridge might put together a shopping list based on the weather, the season, and what you're running low on; motion sensors might alert you to movement in the basement (so you check the video feed, but it's just the dog); the washer/dryer might automatically delay itself until electricity costs are cheaper.

But, smart homes are just the beginning. Our cities soon will be smart, too: streetlamps will only shine when there's someone beneath them or a car is approaching and traffic lights will change based on how many cars are at the intersection. Smart healthcare will track our



At left: White House Presidential Innovation Fellow Geoff Mulligan, Coach Kathy Kemper, IFE Innovation Steward Dr. Amy Geng, and White House Presidential Innovation Fellow Dr. Sokwoo Rhee. Pictured Right: John Paul Farmer, Aneesh Chopra, Coach Kathy Kemper



vitals and alert us when we need to see a doctor. It will improve the connectivity between home health systems and medical providers. It will remind us to take our medicine and automatically reorder when we are low. For the elderly sensors in a home will alert First Responders if someone has fallen and not able to get up. Even dog collars are going smart; letting us know whether Kolby is lazing in the sun or destroying the neighbor's garden, and search dogs will be outfitted with sensors to help locate and direct robots to survivors after a natural disaster.

Last December two Presidential Innovation Fellows, Dr. Sokwoo Rhee and Geoff Mulligan organized the SmartAmerica Challenge which brought together industry, academia, and government to make sure the U.S. is leading the world when it comes to defining and building the IoT industry (and creating the jobs that go along with it).

On June 11th, SmartAmerica is hosting a free, open-to-the-public Expo at the Washington DC Convention Center. U.S. Chief Technology Officer Todd Park is giving a keynote address and there will be lots of demonstrations of smart tech (autonomous robots, 3D printing, security tech, healthcare systems, driverless

cars). Twenty-four teams working on healthcare, energy, transportation, disaster response and manufacturing will demo their work and explain how the IoT industry will redefine what it means for people, towns, cities and governments to be connected to the Internet.

Yes, the Internet of Things is a technological revolution, but at the end of the day, the journey to a networked society will have real economic and social impacts on each and every of us, and that's what matters most.

Aneesh Chopra, former U.S. Chief Technology Officer and bestselling author of *Innovative State*, sums it up:

"As the old adage states, 'you can't manage what you can't measure.' An important benefit from IoT will be in driving up productivity in the sectors of our economy where we need it most - encouraging wellness, energy efficiency, and transportation throughput, among others. We'll have far more precise 'feedback loops' which will improve recommendations for living better lives." ■

Kathy Kemper is founder and CEO of the Institute for Education a nonprofit foundation, headquartered in Washington, DC, that recognizes and promotes leadership and civility locally, nationally and in the world community. IFE also encourages youth global citizenship with programs that foster intercultural understanding.