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Friending your stuff

Are your fridge, car and tennis racquet managing their own social-media presence yet? It's only a matter of time, says EVERYTHNG

London- and Zurich-based year-old startup EVERYTHNG is building a social network for everyday objects. "Our idea was: what if every object had its own presence on the net, so you could talk to it?" says Andy Hobsbawm, the company's cofounder and CMO. "We call it 'a Facebook of things.'" Once an object has a digital profile, developers build apps that allow its owner to amass data about it.

The technology uses manufacturer's identifiers, such as barcodes, QR codes and RFID chips, to connect objects to a database. Scanning an object's tag with a smartphone activates its digital identity. In a pilot for Father's Day in Brazil, alcoholic-beverage giant Diageo connected whisky bottles to the EVERYTHNG database. People could buy a bottle for their dads and activate its digital identity with a smartphone, launching a web app. "Then, when your dad scans it, the video tribute pops up on his phone. You've attached a piece of personalised content to travel with that bottle," Hobsbawm says.

Along with cofounders Dom Guinard, 31, Niall Murphy, 43 (who also cofounded Wi-Fi company The Cloud, which sold to Sky in 2011), and Vlad Trifa, 32, Hobsbawm has built a database to store "thngs": digital identities that collect textual, binary and geolocation information. The database stores 200,000 identities and the company plans to manage a billion within the next three years. The software

also has a set of APIs, to enable apps for user-generated product personalisation (as Diageo is doing), customer-loyalty rewards and data-tracking for retailers.

EVERYTHNG has funding worth \$1m (£600,000) from Niklas Zennström's Atomico, among others, and is partnering with ARM to produce an embedded-sensor system that will be implanted in cars, toys and other objects. "This isn't about getting machines to talk to each other," Hobsbawm, 49, says.

"It's about connecting owners to their products, so they can respond dynamically to real-time data." *MV evrythng.com*



Connected: EVERYTHNG's Dom Guinard, Niall Murphy, Andy Hobsbawm and Vlad Trifa



Tablet extra!
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