

# Daily Herald

## Experts: Wearable tech, connections to our stuff are likely 2015 trends



By Anna Marie Kukec as published in the Daily Herald – December 26, 2014

Wearable technology, more connections with your house and car, and faster speeds continue to dominate the hottest technologies expected in the new year, according to suburban tech experts.

As more police officers explore the use of wearable cameras in the aftermath of turmoil in various cities this year, and consumers continue to seek new ways to do old tasks, it's easy to see how sensors and other devices will become more prominent.

We asked some local executives and other tech pros what they believe will be the trends in the coming year. Let us know if you agree.

Paul Steinberg, senior vice president and chief technology officer, [Motorola Solutions](#), Schaumburg: In 2015, several markets will benefit from the use of wearable technologies. For example, police departments will begin using wearables and interconnected sensors to harness the endless flow of data. Officers and dispatchers will have efficient access to the right information, at the right time, and in the right way at the most critical moments. From smart glasses paired with police radios or mission-critical handheld devices, to interconnected body sensors and wearable cameras, these next-generation wearables will play a key role in an officer's ability to safely collect and receive critical information in new, unobtrusive ways, while keeping their eyes up and their hands free.

Shelley Goodman, vice president and general manager of Illinois and Wisconsin, [AT&T](#), Hoffman Estates: We expect that 2015 will see continued innovation in what many call the Internet of Things. Expect to see products considered niche in 2014 now move into the mainstream in 2015 as more consumer electronics are connected to the Internet and more cars come to market equipped with high-speed mobile Internet connections and, in some cases, in-car Wi-Fi capabilities. Our selection of fitness, smart locator and smartwatch wearables is unmatched in the industry. We were one of the first telecommunications companies in the world to establish an Internet of Things Solutions department to discover and develop new opportunities in technology. We recently opened the AT&T Drive Studio to collaborate with automobile manufacturers on innovation and research.

David Williams, regional vice president of sales and marketing, [Comcast](#), Schaumburg: Xfinity TV customers watched nearly 3 billion hours of On Demand content in the last year. More and more, they're

streaming it to their tablets and smartphones using our Xfinity TV and Xfinity TV Go apps. To accommodate the rapid growth in demand for mobile access to television and other content, Comcast will continue to expand its Xfinity Wi-Fi network rapidly. Already, there's more than 675,000 Xfinity Wi-Fi hot spots in Illinois, northwest Indiana and southwest Michigan, and nearly 8 million in locations across the country. In addition to continuing to add hot spots locally and across the country, in 2015, Xfinity high-speed Internet customers will be able to access Wi-Fi hot spots in several European countries.

Jody S. Jankovsky, managing partner, [Black|Line Consulting](#), Naperville: For the small and mid-sized business, 2015 will see a continued adoption of cloud-based technologies to run business applications and replace aging infrastructure. For example, Microsoft's cloud product for email and collaboration (MS365) is a slam-dunk for customers planning upgrades this year. In addition, 2015 will see a significant increase in security and disaster recovery initiatives driven by the fact small and mid-sized businesses' operational efficiencies are closely intertwined with information technology and, therefore, very sensitive to interruption. In summary, small and mid-sized businesses should seriously consider the adoption of cloud-based solutions for their entire IT operation in order to take advantage of the cost savings, stability and scalability these technologies provide.

Nicholas Zito, business services director, [Choose DuPage](#); and project manager, [Rev3 Innovation Center](#), Naperville: In 2015, I expect to see a large trend upward in what I call smart hardware. This industry is at the intersection of technology and physical manufacturing. We are seeing the convergence of new, cutting edge technology being embedded into and breathing new life into everyday items. Think of wearables. As evidenced by Google's recent multibillion-dollar acquisition of the learning thermostat company, Nest, I believe we will continue to see the transformation of other ubiquitous home goods that are old, unchanged, and very ripe for innovation. At Rev3, we've hosted hackathons where teams of entrepreneurs have greatly streamlined everyday interaction and efficiency by improving upon old practices. One team created a smartphone app that uses wearable technology to detect resting average heart rate, effectively keeping you awake when behind the wheel. As consumer acceptance grows, I see many opportunities for both established and startup companies to improve upon user experience.

Adam Ferguson, vice president of client engagement, [SWC Technology Partners](#), Oak Brook: There have been an overwhelming amount of security breaches publicized this year and the vast majority are the result of basic methods of entry into a customer's environment, meaning users clicking on a link that contains malware that infiltrates into an organization's system and connects back to robots that exploit the organization's data. Our customers have found success using FireEye products for cyber security and malware protection. The right products coupled with the right tactics, such as security managed services, are necessary to limit risk and keep an organization's environment secure. There has been a real paradigm shift in application development using cloud-based models. In 2014, we have noticed that customers are no longer just talking about application development in the cloud, they are actually doing it. In 2015, leveraging Microsoft Azure for application development in the cloud provides huge economic savings and drastically reduces the time it takes organizations to go to market.

Paul Matker, chief executive officer, [Thanx Media](#), Glen Ellyn: In 2015, new mobile commerce technologies will continue to dramatically change the way we shop and the way retailers sell products. Technologies now being tested include concepts such as apps that connect shoppers with a human online shopping concierge who can assist the shopper in real time, augmented reality for virtual dressing rooms to try on clothing, placing orders through social networks, and the ability to get an online order delivered faster than the local pizza place. Advancements in mobile and e-commerce technology will allow shoppers to take a photograph of a product with an app while in the aisle of a store to receive personalized pricing, more product information or one-on-one expert help. Additionally, as more data about shoppers becomes available from multiple sources, such as social media, we're going to see very sophisticated technology emerge for online merchandising and marketing. The largest brands are already leading the way by experimenting with technologies that leverage vast amounts of customer data to create a social shopping experience. One example is letting shoppers know -- in real time -- what products are trending. Showing shoppers what products are hot has great potential to influence purchase behavior in real time. In effect, it's similar to the kind of gravitational pull that might happen when a window shopper sees a line at the Apple store for a new iPhone release.

Todd Thibodeaux, president and CEO, [CompTIA](#), Downers Grove: Whether it's the consumer or business markets, wearable technology will come of age in 2015. Smart watches, medical devices and intelligent control interfaces are just a few of the categories that will make an impact. Wearable technologies also will tie in to another area that's poised for growth -- the Internet of Things -- where everyday devices and structures have sensor capabilities, compute power and connectivity that allows for data sharing.

Burt Goode, vice president, [Chicago Computer Society](#), LaGrange and Palatine: In 2015, wireless technology, the glue connecting everything, is getting faster, more available, and more reliable to let our newest devices communicate in ways never considered before. We can reach Wi-Fi sources at home or work, with a hot spot anywhere; or most restaurant or retail locations. With this easier communication your devices can access the cloud for data storage; go to websites with information and applications; make phone calls worldwide in voice or video; or pay bills electronically with just a tap instead of using credit cards. Networking wirelessly with other devices, such as printers, desktops, laptops, tablets, or smartphones and watches are just the beginning as we move to low-cost wireless communication that can talk to the Internet of Things to control appliances, garage doors, thermostats, light bulbs, cook dinner and more. Now watches not only tell time but can communicate through smartphones to give notifications and health information, such as monitor your heartbeat as well as set alarms to wake you up in the morning. Some devices can even take voice input to your cloud agent, answer questions, map your trip, read your email to you, set calendar appointments, and remind you to bring home the groceries.

- Follow Anna Marie Kukec on LinkedIn and Facebook and as AMKukec on Twitter. Write to her at [akukec@dailyherald.com](mailto:akukec@dailyherald.com).