

Smartphone touted as 'remote for your life' at CES

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Huawei's Ascend Mate smartphone is seen at the Huawei booth during the 2013 International CES at the Las Vegas Convention Center on January 10, 2013 in Las Vegas. Dozens of firms at the International Consumer Electronics Show are touting the smartphone as consumer's remote control for life.

It can talk to your car, your refrigerator, water your plants and help you stay fit and healthy: the smartphone is become the consumer's remote

control for life.

That was the message delivered by dozens of firms at the International [Consumer Electronics Show](#), where terms like "appification" were tossed around freely.

The hundreds of thousands of "apps" developed for [mobile platforms](#) such as Apple's iOS, [Google](#)'s Android and Microsoft's [Windows Phone](#) and showcased at the Las Vegas tech gathering are quickly taking a lot of functions that people or different devices used to do.

Nowhere was this more evident in the "connected home" zone of the world's biggest [technology show](#).

Samsung, the South Korean tech giant, showed a connected refrigerator which can stream music from a smartphone, while US appliance maker Dacor unveiled what it called the "first [Android](#) oven," with a panel to check emails and the Web.

US appliance maker Whirlpool showed its lineup of smart appliances which can send a user a text message when the laundry is done.

Whirlpool's refrigerator can also stream music through an app, enabling a host to set a playlist for each course of a dinner party, for example.

"You don't need to be friend on [Facebook](#) with your fridge, but it makes its use easier," quipped Warwick Stirling, Whirlpool's senior director of energy and sustainability.

[South Korea](#)'s LG offered an integrated solution: one smartphone app which can remotely turn on a robotic vacuum or washing machine, or monitor something cooking in the oven.

An LG refrigerator, equipped with a touchscreen panel, can deliver a

shopping list to your smartphone wirelessly, provided that the database is created in the appliance.

"You can control your life with a smartphone," said LG's Lisa Hutchenson.

French-based firm Parrot and Korea's Moneual each showed off an app to allow smartphone users to keep their home plants watered, using a sensor which transmits information on temperature, light and humidity and alerts people when the plants are thirsty.

The home thermostat, locks and lighting can be controlled with an app developed by Ingersoll Rand.

"The phone can be your remote control for your house," said Matt McGovren, marketing manager for the maker of home equipment.

"Everything will be connected, even things not generally associated with smartphones, like locks."

In the car, drivers can mimic their key fob functions to control their car, track, locate and monitor their vehicles with an app from Delphi Automotive, shown at CES.

And Ford and General Motors announced at CES that they will be launching efforts to help app developers create programs which be used in vehicles, some of which already can play streaming movies or music from mobile devices.

"Up to now, radio was the only entertainment in the car," said Thomas Sonnenrein, of the German equipment maker Bosch.

"Today we have a system shared with the Internet, the smartphone and

the car" which "creates a lot of value."

The health segment is exploding with apps which can monitor heart rate, blood sugar, distance traveled by runners and many other things seen in the CES fitness tech zone.

The integration of the television and smartphone was a major focus at CES, with numerous smart TVs sharing with mobile phones and tablets. Not to mention the simple use of the device as a remote TV control.

Shawn DuBravac, chief economist at the Consumer Electronics Association, told the CES opening session that 65 percent of time spend on smartphones now is "non communication activities" such as apps for health, entertainment or other activities.

"We have moved away not only from telephony but from communications being the primary part of these devices," he said.

"So it is not just a communications devices, it is a hardware hub around which people build services... the smartphone is becoming the viewfinder for your digital life."

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