

# Jasper CEO Jahangir Mohammed on the Internet of Things

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Jasper, a maker of cloud-based systems, had just finished moving into its new Santa Clara headquarters when its CEO and founder Jahangir Mohammed sat down for a conversation about the rapidly evolving "Internet of Things."

Mohammed realized his dream of starting a company 11 years ago, before the term Internet of Things had been coined to denote a growing array of smart, connected devices. But he had a vision of a connected world, and he realized that if he created a platform that helped companies launch, manage and bill for services provided by their products, he might have a winner.

Now, in a world of smart cars, smart refrigerators and thermostats that know when you're home, Jasper has worked with more than 1,600 enterprises globally in more than 20 industries. The company has 400 employees. "This is not some vision," he said. "It's really happening now."

Q: How did you end up in Silicon Valley creating technology?

A: You know, way back from childhood I always wanted to run my own company. My dad ran his own grocery store, so really that's what I wanted to do. That's been my passion, and if you want to start a technology company, you have to go to Silicon Valley.

Q: You started Jasper 11 years ago. Back then, the Internet of Things

was just a twinkle in somebody's eye. What did Jasper start out doing?

A: I don't think anybody had heard that term then. I left my previous employer thinking about what should I be doing next, and I was on a fishing trip to Tahoe. Along the way, the check engine light came on in my [car](#). I called the car company, and they said it could be something simple or could be something severe. That was not helpful. They told me to go to Reno. I pulled into the service center, and a guy with a portable computer clamped it into the car engine, into the diagnostics, and after 25 minutes he said there was too much moisture in my gas. He said, "I reset the arrow and you can go." That took me three hours. I wondered, what a pain. Why wasn't this car connected? Somebody should know this automatically and something small like that, they should reset it and not bother me with this light.

Q: So you were thinking the car would analyze itself and report back?

A: Yes. At that time, I was involved in building cellular systems to connect people, so it was normal for me to think that since people are connected, why not connect the things, why not connect the car? Why shouldn't cars talk to whomever they want to? Then on my way back, I was looking at many things. I was buying Coke, and I saw the cash register, and I said this cash register could be connected so the owner knows how many transactions are going on in real time. The Coke vending machine can be connected, so it always has the right stock of goodies. So I just started seeing that just about everything can get connected.

Q: When did you first hear the term "Internet of Things"?

A: Probably five or six years ago. There wasn't a precise moment. It gradually grew on us. When we started the company 11 years ago, we said Jasper is about connecting things globally, wirelessly, and making

those devices become much more useful and become a service. That's how we got started.

Q: I've heard you say that the Internet of Things is not about things. What do you mean by that?

A: The real power of the Internet of Things is that it transforms a static product into a dynamic service. Once a thing is connected, it really becomes unlimited in terms of what it can process, because it can borrow from all the computers in the Internet to do the processing and it has real-time access to all the information in the Internet. It's no longer an isolated thing. It's become part of a fabric of everything connected. And you can dynamically change what it can do for people on a daily, minute-by-minute basis. So now it's only appropriate that we don't look at that as a "thing." It's a part of a much larger fabric. It's a service. This is the real power of the Internet of Things.

Q: What are you doing for your customers?

A: We help companies launch, manage and monetize an IoT service business. What we figured is that, in order for these companies to grow from a product to a service they need software that makes the transformation. The software has to deliver the right service to the right end user, meter usage and bill for it. Somebody has to make money out of it. So we built the software, this cloud-based software platform that works with the device, the applications in the cloud and the network. Our software platform allows these businesses to implement the service and run it in an automated way, so it's that much cheaper and simpler.

Q: Why are automotive manufacturers interested in the IoT?

A: There are many things the car is going to do. The first thing is, the car is going to be connected to the manufacturer, so the manufacturer has a

pulse on your car all the time. When the check engine light comes up, he can diagnose it himself. If it's stolen, you know where your car is. You can do preventive maintenance before the car breaks down. Some car companies are doing this now.

Q: How far have we gotten along the path to full implementation of the IoT?

A: How many innings are there in baseball? We are in the first or second inning.

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## FIVE THINGS YOU DIDN'T KNOW ABOUT JAHANGIR MOHAMMED

- He was the first person in his village in South India to graduate from a university.

-He was named a 2015 World Economic Forum Technology Pioneer.

-He holds 30 U.S. patents and six foreign patents.

-He is an avid reader who consumes at least a book a week.

-He is a big cricket fan who, as a child, skipped classes to attend matches.

## JAHANGIR MOHAMMED

Age: 46 Education: Master's in engineering, Concordia University, Montreal; bachelor's in engineering, CIT, India

Work: CEO, Janis; started his career at Bell Labs; founder and CEO of Kineto Wireless in Milpitas, Calif.

Family: Wife and two daughters

Home: Bay Area

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