

Being more connected opens up new consequences of being hacked

By Amy Thomson, Bloomberg

Come home to a hot iron and smoldering clothes this afternoon? Soon, it may not be a sign of forgetfulness, but rather evidence that you've been hacked.

In coming years, your smartphone will be able to lock your house, turn on the air conditioning, check whether the milk is out of date, or even heat up your iron. Great news, except that all that convenience could also let criminals open your doors, spy on your family or drive your connected car to their lair.

"As these technologies become more sophisticated, it opens up a broader spectrum of threats," said Gunter Ollmann, chief technology officer of IOActive, a tech security firm in Seattle. A world of connected devices makes it possible "for the bad guys to have permanent entry into your household."

What the industry calls "the Internet of things" has been heralded as the next wave of tech riches. By 2020, 26 billion such devices may be connected to the Internet, up from 3 billion today, researcher Gartner Inc. (IT) estimates. That's almost four times the number of smartphones, tablets and PCs that will be in use.

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