The Darkness Beyond The Digital

Internet of Things and Disquiet Connectivity

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The Darkness Beyond The Digital – Internet of Things and Disquiet Connectivity

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New possibilities to connect things to the Internet is promoted forcefully by various stakeholders. While new networked products are shipped and implemented, the knowledge about consequences of digital connectivity is low among users of technology. This means that digital technology permeates everyday life in often bewildering ways. This paper will take the bewildering, and potentially dark, world of networked digital everyday things in domestic settings as its point of departure. What are the Internet-connected devices, equipped with microphones, sensors and cameras, that people habitually dwell with? Who or what might be watching or listening through these things? What about all the data that is generated, while people use products and services?
In recommendations for users how to deal with potential threats coming through digital technologies, users are told not to connect more things than necessary. At the same time, technologies are designed to be connected in order to be useful. Users are recommended not to click on links or open messages if they are suspicious. At the same time, the clicking on links and opening of messages is engrained in the routinised everyday behaviour of lives together with Internet-connected things. How do people deal with these paradoxes of connectivity? How are imaginaries about what is going on beyond the interfaces of digital things influencing everyday behaviour? This paper will take its point of departure in the project Connected Homes and Distant Infrastructures, financed by The Swedish Research Council, to discuss The Internet of Things and potentially disquiet connectivity.