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LAS VEGAS (Dow Jones)--"Smart" isn't just for cell phones anymore.

Gadget makers, intent on adding extensive new features to household devices, are adding the "smart" moniker to a growing number of new products. Everything from digital picture frames to home thermostats now falls into the "smart" category, often denoting an Internet connection and beefed-up computing capability.

In addition, software firms are working to design user-friendly programs that will make it easy for consumers to string together these products. However, the push for smarter products has left some to wonder if all this activity has more to do with marketing than practicality.

"Everyone wants to throw the smart label around, because nobody wants a dumb product," said Linley Gwennap, head of The Linley Group, which tracks mobile devices. "As soon as you put a microprocessor and an Internet connection on anything, the possibilities are endless."

During his keynote address Thursday at the Consumer Electronics Show, Intel Corp. (INTC) Chief Executive Paul Otellini said high-level computing is moving into all types of devices, from automated teller machines to home electricity monitors.

"Every electronic device will eventually connect to the Internet," he said.

That was evident from at the world's largest gathering of consumer technology as many firms demonstrated new products hooked up to the Web.

Pandigital makes a photo frame with its own email address. The device, which also plays music and videos, includes its own data plan so pictures can be transferred directly over e-mail.

Meanwhile, others are building networks of connected smart devices. Salt Lake City-based start-up Control4, which makes software to control home networks, created a thermostat with a digital panel where homeowners can adjust power usage of any of the smart appliances connected to it.

"All of these things need to be interconnected," said Sehat Sutardja, chief executive of chip maker Marvell Technology Group Ltd. (MRVL). "What you see today, all of these devices will be smart devices. Your TV today is like a 10-year-old cell phone, where you only had a menu, volume," he said.

While 3-D televisions have attracted the most attention this year at the Consumer Electronics Show, TVs that have embedded wireless chips are beginning to gain traction as well. Yahoo Inc. (YHOO) showed the

latest advancements for the apps, or widgets, that it wants users to access on TVs. Intel unveiled a new app store that will eventually sell apps for all types of devices, including TVs, smartphones and netbooks.

But questions remain concerning how many devices really need apps and an Internet connection.

During Intel's keynote address, two actors lampooned how seemingly low-tech devices are gaining connectivity. Posing as time travelers to the future exploring what new trends will emerge, one actor took a telephone call on a broom.

"Adding intelligence to your refrigerator or your washing machine--people are still trying to figure out what that's good for," Gwennap said.

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