

NATASHA FRANCK

Founder and CEO of EON Group, United States

Moving on to another example, I am calling on Natasha Franck, an American entrepreneur dealing with IoT for the fashion industry.

Natasha FRANCK

I am founder and CEO of EON. We harness the power of the Internet of Things to enable connected systems – to power a sustainable and circular economy.

Our company works specifically with a focus on the fashion, apparel and retail industries. Why this focus? Fashion is now recognized as the second most polluting industry in the world, second only to oil.

Why can the internet of things help create a circular fashion industry? The Internet of Things is the digitization of the physical world. We think of the Internet as something that we search on our computers. In the near future, the physical world will become searchable as products are created with Digital Identities. By giving every product a Digital Identity – we can enable sustainable, intelligent and transparent management of the lifecycle of that product, to facilitate reuse and material recovery.

So what do we actually do to a physical product to bring it online? At EON, we are introducing one of the industry's first RFID tags in the form of a thread into apparel products. With an RFID tag in the product, we can now create a "Digital Twin" of the product – complete with information about the product's environmental information. With 80% of retailers are moving toward item-level RFID tagging by 2021, there is a tremendous opportunity to leverage this technology for sustainable performance. Once a product has a Digital Identity, it is possible to recognize the product at every stage in the value chain – increase utilization, facilitate resale, and even enable the material transparency essential for recycling.

The Internet of Things (IoT) also introduces new challenges at the intersection of policy, big-data and environmental product stewardship. How should and will policy solutions shape the future of IoT? How can we harness the power of IoT technology for sustainability and improvements in global environmental policy? It is one of the most important things that policymakers, entrepreneurs and technology companies need to get right.

The World Policy Conference presents an incredible opportunity to start looking at those new public-private partnerships, how technology plays in that sphere and how to create solutions that support a regenerative future.

Patrick NICOLET

I would like to stress two points. The RFID tag in the form of a thread is quite a technological achievement, and that will accelerate with the deployment of the 5G telecommunication standard when we master the energy problem on the IoT side, so that will develop. However, another important point is traceability and transparency. There will be no place to hide – you will know from the beginning where it is developed, produced, manufactured, reused and then recycled, and that will provide an enormous amount of data that will not be able to be processed by the normal compliance mechanism we have today, so we will have to integrate these elements. A lot of the IoT data, by the way, will be useless, to be very clear, because you cannot do anything with it, but a very important fraction of it will be extremely useful and will help perform not only the compliance part but also understand how efficiency and effectiveness, notably in consumption, can be improved, because we will identify patterns that we cannot identify today just by observing what we see as human beings.