Smart mitt talks back

The Talking Trivet measures the temperature of the pot it's touching. It needs to be reheated.

Selker added that the costs for the Trivet’s computer equipment are “easily absorbed into the costs of the product. The prices are not prohibitive to the prices people pay for oven mitts anyway.” He figured that a regular mitt would retail between $5 to $10.

Currently the Trivet says, “Ready to take out,” “Hot and ready to eat,” “Needs rewarmin” and “Fire!” (hopefully heard less often than the others). He also might add, “Done in 15 minutes. Check oven.”

Selker thinks it’s neat, but what about kitchen textiles vendors? David Beyda, chairman of Town & Country, Lakewood, NJ, questioned the logistics — i.e., if the temperature was less than 200 degrees, would the Trivet still proclaim the dish was not ready yet, even if it was in the oven for 12 hours? “But it’s a clever idea. The consumer would be the ultimate judge,” he said.

“It sounds like a fun gimmick,” said Howard Steidle Jr., vice president of sales and marketing at John Ritzenthaler, West Conshohocken, PA.

Besides the Talking Trivet, Selker has also brought forth a mug that notifies someone if the liquid will burn his or her lips, an electronic knife that detects bacteria when cutting meat and a spatula that can measure whether a sauce is too salty or acidic.

But Selker is not limited to the kitchen. A bout with tennis elbow led him to invent a mattress pad that tells you where on the bed you’re sleeping and on what body parts. Other possible functions include saying, “Wake up!” if someone stops breathing and then calling 911 if the person doesn’t respond by pressing a button.

And for people who suffer next to snorers? “We have worked on that,” he said. “It’s one of the mattress pad’s functions.”