

WEARABLES WEEKLY: MARCH 2-13, 2015

Apple Launches Watch and ResearchKit

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Apple's "Spring Forward" event that took place on March 9 entailed launches of the Apple Watch, ResearchKit, and a slimmer MacBook Air. When the Apple Watch is formally released on April 24 (pre-orders start April 10), it will respond to voice commands, measure heart rate and other health metrics, operate as a credit card, and provide alerts for incoming calls and e-mails. It will require charging every 18 hours and will range in price from \$350 to \$17,000.

Beyond a sleekly designed smartwatch, Apple also launched [ResearchKit](#). ResearchKit facilitates the sharing of medical data from iPhone users with healthcare professionals for use in clinical trials. Five mobile applications were announced with ResearchKit that focused on breast cancer, diabetes, Parkinson's disease, cardiovascular disease, and asthma. The mobile application developed by Stanford University School of Medicine, [MHeart Counts](#), which measures users' daily activity and exercise level to measure heart health, enrolled 11,000 users in a 24-hour timeframe. This would normally take one year and require a minimum of 50 medical centers across the US. ResearchKit and Apple's API will not be available for another month.

Swatch to Compete with Smartwatch Rivals

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Swatch (owner of Omega, Breguet, Calvin Klein, and others) has plans to develop watches that can make payments and display information from smartphones. They plan to introduce two types of wireless communication technologies. The first one focuses on near-field communication, which can be used to trigger contactless payments and open compatible locks. The second design includes Bluetooth, which will enable the watch to send and receive data to smartphones. Swatch has a strong focus on battery power, so their watches will not need to be charged daily. Swatch does not have plans to develop the fully featured smartwatches being provided by Apple, Motorola, and Pebble. The first watches will go on sale in May.

Huawei Announces New Wearables

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Huawei announced a smartwatch, a smartband, and a new headset earlier this week. The Huawei smartwatch includes an optical heart rate monitor, a motion sensor, and a barometer. It also tracks climbing height, steps, distance, and calories burned. Huawei announced a partnership with Jawbone to capture and use the data from the smartwatch. The smartband – TalkBand B2 – is a Bluetooth band and activity tracker. It includes a sensor and dual microphone, which can be used for up to six hours of call time or for twelve days of standby time. The TalkBand N1 was the final device announced, which is a Bluetooth headset with MP3 storage (for 1,000 songs). It also serves as a fitness tracker, though there is no GPS.

Sony to Equip Virgin Atlantic Engineers with Wearables

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Virgin Atlantic has partnered with Sony to equip plane engineers at Heathrow Airport with the Sony SmartWatch 3 and the SmartEyeglass. The engineers will use the smartglass to stream real-time videos

to technicians to speed technical assistance. The smartwatch will provide notifications of job allocations and any changes in allocations. These devices will commence operation at Heathrow next week.

FitBit Acquires Coaching App FitStar

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FitBit offers a premium \$49.99/year service that entails personalized physical activity plans and goals generated following analysis of users' FitBit data. FitBit's recent acquisition of FitStar, a mobile coaching application, will enable the company to expand its premium subscription features. FitStar's two mobile applications – FitStar Personal Trainer and FitStar Yoga – are free to download but require a paid subscription. They already sync with FitBit and other physical activity applications and devices, including Jawbone and MyFitnessPal. FitStar is backed by Google Ventures and Trinity Ventures.

Pets as the Future of Wearables?

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Wearable tracking devices for pets are rapidly coming through the pipeline. The number of wearables for pets that have entered the market – FitBark, PetPace, Heyrex, Tagg, Tractive Motion, Whistle – allow owners to gather information on their pet's exercise. They also encourage the owners to exercise more regularly. The devices sync with the owner's smartphone.