



Wearables Weekly

Compiled by Sarah Kunkle and Gillian Christie

April 4, 2016: Q1 Roundup

As we wrap up the first quarter of this year, here are five themes that have emerged in the early months of 2016. In other headlines this week, Under Armour finally released its \$400 HealthBox and a new study of 136,000 consumer reviews reports findings on which wearable devices users are most and least satisfied. Read the latest below!

1. **Beyond step counting**

Wearables have traditionally focused on physical activity metrics, but an increasing number of technologies are addressing health in a more holistic way, including issues like [mental health](#) and [smoking cessation](#). While health technologies have often neglected to address female reproductive health, [fertility tracking](#) has become a particularly hot area. As these applications expand, both [Apple](#) and [Fitbit](#) are also extending their business from consumer technology to research and healthcare institutions.

2. **Better design**

Many consumers have complained that wearables are ugly, cumbersome, and uncomfortable. It seems manufacturers are finally listening. Fitbit released the [Alta](#) and has partnered with fashion brand [Public School](#) on accessories for its new device. At CES 2016, Misfit delayed the stylish [Ray](#) tracker. [Fossil](#), which recently acquired Misfit, has also released a variety of good-looking fitness trackers and smartwatches.

3. **Smart clothing**

At CES 2016, a number of companies unveiled smart clothing items including [smart shoes](#), a [sports bra](#), and various products from [Samsung](#). Ralph Lauren also recently introduced its \$300 [PoloTech](#) fitness shirt, a compression top with sensors and a companion app that displays these metrics and incorporates the data into customized workouts and training programs.

4. **Advancing sensor technology**

Relevant to our first theme above, wearable sensors are advancing beyond an ability to count steps and estimate energy expenditure. A new [Apple Watch band](#) provides medical grade EKG readings and will become commercial available pending FDA approval. Researchers from South Korea have developed a patch that can both [monitor blood glucose levels](#) and deliver medication to control blood sugar levels. Another research team at UC Berkeley has developed a [flexible sensor](#) that measures the electrolytes and metabolites in sweat, along with skin temperature.

5. **Potential financial constraints**

Some people are predicting that the [digital health bubble](#) is about to pop. There has been no shortage of bad press surrounding unicorns Theranos and Zenefits in their attempts to disrupt the industry. In wearables, both [Jawbone](#) and [Pebble](#) have recently experienced financial issues. Despite these troubles, wearables are certainly [not a fad](#) – the market experienced [huge growth](#) in 2015 and is projected to continue growing.

Other Health Technology Headlines

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[Under Armour's New Fitness Tracker Has Arrived](#)

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