

COLUMNS

What could keep smart watches ticking

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By [Tej Rekhi](#)

The success of the Pebble on Kickstarter attracted attention worldwide to an intriguing new category of devices: smart watches. Since then, more products have emerged from Motorola's MotoActv and Sony's SmartWatch with rumors of Apple's iWatch.

Should we really get excited about the smart watch, or is it just a gimmick? Also, what about the fact that people just do not wear wrist watches anymore? Many of us now use our mobile phones to keep time.

But there are also some practical advantages of the smart watch that cannot be ignored.

Best hand for ads

For those people who keep their phone in a bag, the watch becomes useful for screening calls, and looking for your social media updates without having to dig for the phone.

With smartphones wrapped in radio technologies such as the recently introduced Bluetooth 4 that extends battery life, there is no reason why that pocketed processing power cannot now extend to reach smarter, wearable peripherals.

In addition, computers are already becoming fashion accessories. Plenty of people use Bluetooth headsets and strap their phone to their arm while running.

There is also the futuristic Google glasses that provide augmented reality while connecting users to maps, calendars and just about anything else they want from the Web.

The current trend is not just for smart watches to mirror fashion statements as small ovals located on the wrist. With curved glasses coming into play, smart watches can become a whole shape and size that enable more engaging user experiences including video.

But beyond the convenience for consumers, smart watches could also be the next best thing for location-based advertising.

Watch out

Immediate alerts of local sales will not work if people have their phones tucked away in a pocket or a purse. They will only see the ad if by chance they stop what they are doing and start browsing or using an application the precise minute the ad is served.

If they only view the ad 20 minutes later, the whole user experience is wasted. Smart watches, by making the ad visible when it matters most, can make location-based advertising shine.

The smart watch can add a final point before conversion, pushing people through the purchase funnel.

At the same time, the smart watch has the ability to use predictive targeting to alert consumers of offers in advance while planning purchases and not just at the point of sale.

The smart watch will be integrated with the smartphone, enabling the watch to benefit from location-based capabilities, and user data when the user allows.

As the market matures, Apple and Android will become major players providing a standard interface that developers can work with, and products that consumers trust.

However, serving ads on the smart watch is not just dependent on technology but requires the collaboration and cooperation of the consumer.

Opt-in to hop in

Without prior opt-in and the ability to specify relevant products or services, the magic appearance of an ad as consumers pass by a store entrance can be viewed as intrusive or even creepy.

The key to success is soliciting the user's cooperation up front so that ads are relevant and welcome.

By enabling consumers to select those merchants or products they want to engage with, positive brand associations are created that boost customer acceptance of location-based advertising while increasing the likelihood that ad recipients will convert.

An open invitation can stop consumers from preventing tracking by regularly deleting cookies, browsing history or possibly even using apps to block ads altogether.

SMART WATCHES provide an opportunity to play smart and target well by becoming an extension to smart phone that is central to our daily lives.

The alert on your wrist for products or services you are interested in could be the service that justifies the cool gadget you just bought.

It might impress your friends when a Diesel logo flashes right when you pass by your favorite jeans store, showing you have not only good taste in fashion but also in the latest technology.

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