

Thinking about the future of wearables today

by Igor Kozhuernko

The launch of Apple Watch has meant that wearable technologies – and smart watches in particular – are getting a lot of attention. Just think about this; according to [Juniper research](#), over 70M fitness wearable devices are expected to be in use worldwide by 2018, up from 19M in 2014. On top of that, [Business Insider estimates](#) that the smart watch will be the leading product category on the wearable market and will account for 59% of total wearable device shipments this year, expanding to just over 70% of shipments by 2019.

Paired with a smartphone, smart watches can offer rich functionality across a number of verticals like healthcare, travel, the smart home, IoT and capital markets. Their future, however, is tied to two factors:

- The reliability of the hardware;
- Stellar services that could empower the people wearing wearables.

Here's what needs to be understood. Smart watches are not another type of a mobile device. They're a new generation of technology, and call for a whole new approach to application design. For your app to thrive, you need to account for three basic realities:

- The screen has a limited amount of space;
- The user flow is entirely different from those of mobile applications;
- Users expect a personalized experience.

DataArt design and R&D teams took all of the above into consideration when developing the approach for [developing apps for wearables](#). We realized that whatever experiences the app is expected to deliver they should be achieved in fewer than three taps, which requires prioritizing notifications and assuring the app doesn't become "spammy", driving users away.

These three rules are simple, but they make a huge difference and have helped app rich devices evolve into more complex and comprehensive products. They started off with very basic functions, such as gathering sensor data (think fitness trackers) or providing remote access to smart homes and cars, and are moving into a more mature

phase where the application can offer useful, if still slightly limited, data analytics that gives users real time information.

In the wellness space mobile apps linked to smart clothing analyze the intensity of your exercise and provide instant recommendations to assure you don't inflict injury from over exertion. **In** the Internet of Things (IoT) industry, smart watch applications now bring alerts from your home security system straight to your wrist.

In [travel](#), wrist bands can be used to unlock your hotel room, while smart watches can be used to provide flight status updates or help with airport check-ins.

How can companies use wearables and smart devices to empower their customers and employees?

First, wearable tech can help employees on the move with tracking their activities and providing suggestions on better time management. From logistics optimization to real-time notifications, companies can gather data to help their staff achieve more during the day.

In healthcare the possibilities are even more compelling. Doctors and healthcare providers use the data from fitness trackers and blood pressure monitors to provide their patients with real time advice and suggestions, and integrating this data with calendars, give better insights into their health routine.

Mobile or smart watch apps with these capabilities can predict a rising stress level or prevent physical conditions *before* they become critical or even noticeable.

Smart watches are opening the door to new possibilities. The most important thing to remember though is that the user experience should always come first. It needs to be simple, useful and not irritating to the user.

About Igor

Igor Kozhurenko is a software industry expert with 17 years of experience. For the past four years he has been leading product development of software ecosystems for the world of wearables. Igor is now Vice President, R&D at DataArt (<http://www.dataart.com>), a technology consulting firm that offers end-to-end solutions, from concept and strategy, to design, implementation and support.

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