

Critical Response - Jonathan Follett- *Fashion With Function: Designing for Wearables*

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In this article wearables are discussed and the author establishes that fashion and technology coexist and transform alongside human development. Wearable technology that does not follow fashionable trend and comfort becomes obsolete and quickly forgotten. Technology that can transform with the user and is accessible to many different demographics is more classic in a sense that it can withstand the test of time. Much like the mentioned 'barometer' in David Rose's "Enchanted Objects's"

Follett describes the four main UX/ human factors to consider when designing fashion technology: visibility, the technology's role, the display on the device or its screen, and interaction model. The visibility of the device and how its worn will determine the demographic of who will wear this object, why they will wear it and how it will interact with this user in a fashionable sense, this could mean fast-fashion, and waste of technology or a new classic, and a wearable that has stickiness to it. The role of the technology integrated into the user's life will metaphorically fulfill a basic wearable need the user has. Follett mentions: the roles of 'messenger', 'tracker', 'enhancer', and 'facilitator'. These roles are similar to David Rose's "eight human drives", and allow the user to express their needs and find answers with simple gesture in a discreet manner. Display on the device is extremely important, and can make-or-break wearables as well, the screen and LED displays of gadget-like wearables (i.e. Apple Watch, FitBit) need to use the 'less-is-more' principle and not overwhelm user's with extensive data overload. Follett stresses that not all interactions need be visual; vibration, auditory and glanceable design are more attractive in some senses as they do not distract users from the daily routine. They intertwine new semiotics into the daily that are discreet. "Wearables are part of a broader ecosystem of connected devices, and thus they need to be considered in the bigger constellation, along a variety of contexts and functionalities." (Follett. *Designing for Emerging Technologies*) This statement is to reapply his overall thesis that wearables can be intertwined into our lives, and that there is a demand for it. "There could be advantages to using garments rather than attaching gadgets, as some of the sensors need to be placed in exact positions on the body." (Draper. Reportable Technologies) This article is demonstrative of the seemingly long-term thought behind wearable technology, but what both authors forget is that this technology and fabrics come with an ecological price. Which is not evaluated from endangered positions in either of these articles.

The writing is very analytical of the step-by-step ways which a designer could checkmark the worthiness of their wearable idea. The style of the writing is very instructive and in small fragmented paragraphs, I would say this is ineffective as the reading of this article begins to repeat itself. The structure of the writing makes the article sound impersonal and less intriguing, than an article with personal narrative and more opinionated writing. Similar to how David Rose describes ineffective design being something impersonal and hard to relate to in his terminal world of glass surfaces, this article has little personality and thus is less inviting to larger demographics of readers (as if it were a design object), and more as an informative manual, only approached by designers. Follet brings to our attention the methodologies in which one can successfully design an effective wearable, however he fails to design an effective article for large audience. The article is a staple for any designer searching to create meaningful wearable technology, as its factuality and reason are useful. This article has hidden negative language written into its dialog. The author points out only issues and complications for wearable technology and forgets to present truly successful examples. (There are few, like the FlyFit ankle bracelet, and bluetooth necklace) however all examples remain cold and lacking the kind of personality that makes helpful technological design special and seemingly magical.

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

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