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12/07/2017

Fashion with Function: Designing for Wearables

Reading Response

This chapter covers wearables. Which is specified to not be confused the embedded technologies as it isn't part of someone but rather worn on the skin or in clothing. Think of it as an accessory. Like a lot of technological advancements, wearables primarily began in the military and as the components became cheaper and more accessible, the public slowly started to be able to purchase or design a wearable piece. This technology can be applied to pretty much every aspect of life, especially today, but is still considered in its infancy despite being a huge aspect in the market at the moment.

Overall the chapter categories wearables in four areas. The first is sport/fitness trackers. These generally track the bodies reaction to physical activity, but also tracks statistics to help understand how your action affect your body. The second category is health and medical sensors. Arguably the most important wearable as it helps doctors keep track of a patient's health while in the care of a hospital. Think heartbeat monitor, or blood pressure. Very important advancement that has made medical care quality very streamlined. The third category is smartwatches. These watches kind of take the two previous categories and merges them. As these watches can monitor health, the bodies state, but also includes functions that smartphones initially uniquely had. The final category is smart glasses. These products show visuals on the lens and include virtual reality units and provide increased interaction with the world.

These four categories establish the foundation to wearables and leads to the next point which is UX and human factors to consider. These are essentially design routes. The first is role of the wearable. This is pretty direct, essentially is the product a tracker, or does it send messages, does it make life easier, or does it enhance previous products. The second part is the display. Does it have one? Is it minimal or very detailed? Sport trackers could be minimal, while smartwatches or vr glasses are very detailed. The third category is visibility.

Simply put, can it be seen by others or you, or can it not. This is important as, visibility can affect how people see you, or judge you. It also presents more information as to its use. The final category is the interactive model. Does it have only one interactivity or is it composed of multiple ones. These functions include visual cues, audio cues, tactibility and actual physical buttons.

Overall this chapter is more about information and not much thought provoking topics. It essentially covers the tip of the icycle for wearables as there are some important questions to ask about them, leading up to embedded technologies, which I consider to be the next step of wearables.