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How far can we take the word wearable?

There are so many different art pieces that someone can create with technology. One of those items is called a wearable. These wearables can come in many different styles and shapes; from a wrist band, a dress, or a belt, the list can go on. Wearables are technology that is run by sensors or motors that are connected to some code that is run by a computer program. In the text called "Design Framework for Social Wearables", it states that on some level having someone wear a wearable during a real-life situation or an encounter can affect that real-life scenarios and that in person social interaction. That can be true, because if you walk up to someone with a wearable on it (of course if you notice it is a wearable and especially if it is created in an odd shape) can start a conversation or the wearable can affect the users and viewer in some way. However, my question is, does a wearable have to be restricted to something a person wears or can it be an object that someone holds or has next to them and can the purpose of the wearable be more than an art piece or a topic of conversation. After all a wearable is said to affect that real-life scenarios but are those real-life scenarios limited to an interaction between two people or can that real life scenarios be surrounding someone's health?

Before going into what the object is, can we stretch the definition of what a wearable is? Does it need to be limited to something we wear? Is holding an object good enough? The definition of a wearable is a "electronic devices that can be worn as accessories, embedded in clothing, implanted in the user's body, or even tattooed on the skin. The devices are hands-free gadgets with practical uses, powered by microprocessors and enhanced with the ability to send and receive data via the Internet" (Kenton). The object in question is a pillow and the way that this "wearable" can affect someone's health is by touch or being next to it. This pillow can affect a person's mental health is by having the skill to make a person feel better. I do not see why a pillow cannot be something that is embedded into the body by someone's hands. A person can be holding the object and their hands are a part of the human body, so in the end the pillow is like an accessory to the human body, almost like it is a part of the body. The pillow is something that a person can interact with by the element of touch. There are lights on the pillow and the way that the lights open is that a user has to touch the pillow. The purpose of this pillow is to help someone, so it is representing someone's own personal at home light therapy box. The purpose of the

light box is that, it is said it can “help with [...] types of depression, sleep disorders and other conditions.”¹ So having this pillow be a light therapy box on you or in your hands it can be an alternative method that can help you with your health, when nothing else is working or you do not want to get any medication.

Wearable technology is not just for one’s entertainment, it can be for one’s health care. Wearable technology for people’s health is to detect and are “designed to collect the data of users' personal health and exercise” (Phaneuf). Wearable technology can help someone in their time of need, and there are reports that wearable technology can have health benefits and is not just a gimmick. According to *Welbi*, a company that wants to “help reduce social isolation in retirement communities”, did a study on the health benefits of wearing wearable technology. *Welbi* states that having a wearable on a person can do a number of things, from “encouraging proactive healthcare” to “monitoring vulnerable patients”. The aspect that stood out was when it states that when people “experience a health problem, and they react by going to get it checked out. With wearable tech, there is potential for a more proactive approach to healthcare. Instead of reacting to health issues after they begin causing problems, wearables can be used to take action in the early stages.”² So, with this pillow having the effect of helping heal a person’s stress or anxiety, it will help you before your health takes a turn for the worst. With this info, it is then a good idea to have the pillow, for someone who needs it. Some might not agree and say it is not natural to have this type of technology to help us with our health, however we live in a time where things are involving and technology is becoming a bigger part the society in all aspect even health.

In conclusion, I think it is fair to say that people might think that a wearable can be anything that a person holds. The strap on the object can act as a bracelet that a user can have around their hand. So, in result a user is wearing this object. It can be the same with holding the pillow close to you. At the end of the day, we can call a wearable what we want as long as it has to do with the body. We cannot call an object a wearable if its purpose is to be on the floor and not on the body.

¹ “Light Therapy.” Mayo Clinic, Mayo Foundation for Medical Education and Research, 8 Feb. 2017, www.mayoclinic.org/tests-procedures/light-therapy/about/pac-20384604.

² “5 Health Benefits of Wearable Tech.” *Welbi*, www.welbi.co/single-post/5-health-benefits-of-wearable-tech.

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