

Reflection #4

Designing for Wearables

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When designing for wearables there are many factors to consider to give a smooth UX experience, which is necessary in such a budding field, especially since users aren't used to such ubiquitous technology. The four main factors to take under consideration are visibility, role, display on-device, and interaction model.

Visibility is a good first stop, as where the device will be worn will affect many other aspects of the device's design. Most importantly, if the device is in an inconvenient location for visual feedback (display) it will either have to be designed to transmit messages through haptic/audible feedback or route its visual display to another device. For mass adaptation of the device it also has to seamlessly blend into wherever it is placed, so if it will be worn outside of garments the user has to align their expressive style to the device. Most devices can do this by targeting audiences with sleek black, white, or an all metal designs. They may be marketed as jewelry, accessories, or clothing to blend better into everyday life.

Roles can include tracker (fitness/health), messenger (notifications), facilitator (offers a simpler/better experience for some aspect of a smartphone), or enhancer (augments/layers information). Depending on the device type one is creating it is helpful to tailor the function to one of these roles as they are already market acceptable.

Display on-device sets wearable technology apart from wearable augmentation. Having a display, whether full OLED, or a minimal LED display

allows a greater range of communication with the user and often allows bypassing the need to communicate with other devices to pass information. Since it does not require a receiver and can be worn on its own it is a stand alone wearable.

Interaction model have three main methods for micro interactions which can be reduced to input and output. Input and output rely on the five senses. Input for smartphones is mostly tactile, though with Siri and Ok Google, verbal communication is also possible. When designing wearables the devices function should always help influence what input methods are accepted, and output is complimentary to this. For minimal displays for example, when tactile input is received it helps for auditory output to accompany it to alert the user it has recognized the input. This kind of input/output using the senses is referred to as multi-modal interaction. If the device is really not designed for maximum interaction it is helpful to use multi-device interaction. With this type of interaction the output can be translated to something such as a smartphone.