



Wearables Weekly

Compiled by Sarah Kunkle and Gillian Christie

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As the New Year begins, we reflect upon 2015's health technology headlines to identify themes in digital health that we predict will be even bigger in 2016:

1. Wearables Go Corporate

Personalized health technologies can [drive behavior change](#), but this change is unlikely to occur in a vacuum. In order for wearables to impact health outcomes, they must be part of larger engagement strategies, including workplace health programs that utilize principles of behavioral economics to motivate individuals. In 2015, [Fitbit](#) and [Apple](#) focused on corporate health offerings. We expect this trend to continue in 2016 with Fitbit and Apple expanding partnerships and more players entering the field.

2. Augmented Intelligence

Smartphones and personalized health technologies are generating more data that require advanced analytics. Machine learning and cognitive computing could be the answer. Certain [health applications](#) are already using these algorithms to make tailored recommendations based on user activity. IBM's Watson remains the market leader here with a variety of partners ([CVS Health](#), [Novo Nordisk](#), [Memorial Sloan Kettering](#) to name a few).

3. Mind-Body Connection

A new crop of products is adopting a more holistic view of health. [Spire](#) and [Caeden](#) are stylish devices that monitor heart and respiration rates to improve mindfulness among users. [Ginger.io](#) and [Big White Wall](#) provide mental health services via smartphones to combat the stigma often associated with these conditions.

4. Mergers and Partnerships

Fossil's \$260 million acquisition of Misfit in November was the latest deal in a year full of [collaborations](#) and acquisitions. According to Misfit founder [Sridhar Iyengar](#), smaller startups are well-equipped to bridge the gap between healthcare giants and consumer brands. Recognizing the potential of digital health offerings, more established companies will look to acquire or partner with health technology startups.

5. Pricing Pressures

While the [Apple Watch Edition](#) retails for \$17,000 and TAG Heuer recently introduced a \$1,500 luxury smartwatch, more movement is being made on the lower end. [Xiaomi](#), the third largest wearables vendor according to IDC, introduced a heart-rate monitoring tracker that sells for just \$16. The [Pivotal Living Fitness Band](#) provides users with an activity tracker and app for \$12 with an upgrade option each year. These ultra-affordable wearables will put pressure on current market leaders.

6. Building Evidence

As the market matures, demonstrating evidence of impact on health outcomes will provide companies with a competitive edge. An [Omada Health-Humana trial](#) recently showed that digital health tools could help Medicare Advantage members achieve significant weight loss. [Evidation Health](#) is partnering with Ochsner Health System in New Orleans to study digital health efficacy. While there is an inherent trade-off between innovation and evidence-based practices, more technology assessments are necessary to get buy-in from the broader healthcare community.

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