

## Read all about it: News you can wear

August 10 2014, by Rob Lever

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A Samsung employee demonstrates the new SM-R381 Smartwatch, during the Tizen Developer Conference in San Francisco, California, on June 3, 2014

Even if you don't open a newspaper, turn on a television, log on to a computer or pull out a smartphone, you can get news—from wearable technology.

As wearables gain traction, [news](#) purveyors are eyeing these devices for their potential to deliver headlines and more to people who want to stay up to date.

Some news apps already have the capacity to deliver news notifications, or full articles, to smartwatches or eyewear such as Google Glass.

"We are going full speed on smartwatches," said Gilles Raymond, the San Francisco-based chief executive of News Republic, a mobile app that delivers news to mobile devices from hundreds of outlets.

Raymond told AFP he expects people will find it useful to get not only headlines but full articles on a smartwatch as the wearable trend revs up.

"When the iPhone came out, people were saying that not one would read news on a phone. Now nobody is saying that," said Raymond.

"People will read articles on a watch. They may not read 300 articles, but people adapt quickly to technology."

Raymond founded News Republic in France and has expanded to other European markets as well as North America and China, aggregating news from hundreds of outlets, including AFP, Al-Jazeera, Reuters and The Associated Press.

Roman Karachinsky, CEO of the news aggregation app News360, also sees a future for wearables, but mainly for quick notifications they might not otherwise see.

"We want to change the formula from one where you go and seek information out to a world where information finds you when it's relevant and useful," Karachinsky said.

He said the newly introduced Android Wear platform for Google allows for News360 alerts to be sent to some smartwatches, and to Google Glass.



An attendee wears a Google Glass during the Google I/O Developers Conference at Moscone Center in San Francisco, California, on June 25, 2014

These alerts fulfill a need of getting information out quickly—whether it is a sports score, stock market action or breaking news—in an unobtrusive way.

"Instead of digging around your pocket for your smartphone, now you can just look at your wrist or glance up to your Google Glass," said Karachinsky. "It's a very transformative experience."

## **'Glanceability'**

It remains unclear at the moment how fast wearable technologies will catch on, and how people will use the devices.

While News Republic's Raymond sees a demand for full articles, he differs from News360 on Google Glass.

But he said smartwatches may gain more traction when they become independent of smartphones, allowing people to shed their phones for some of the time.

Roger Kay, analyst at Endpoint Technologies Associates, said news on smartwatches and Google Glass will probably be limited to short items that can be absorbed in a glance.

"The glanceability of it is important," Kay said.

"I don't imagine people squinting at their watches to read articles; they have enough trouble reading on their phones."

Still, Kay noted that "a well-written headline can encapsulate an entire story."

For [news organizations](#) struggling with the transition to digital, wearables may offer some help, analysts say.

Ken Doctor of the media research firm Outsell said news organizations may be able to bring in more readers with alerts tailored to their interests, by delivering through wearables.

Doctor said that major news organizations are now delivering millions of email alerts on important news for readers who register, and that this drives more traffic to the websites. The same could be true for alerts on wearables.

"The news alerts business, which has been around for 20 years, is having a huge revival," he said. "This is a technique that works because of

mobile and smartphones."

Important in this effort is getting readers to register, to be able to determine the news they want to see—essentially tracking their habits using the same techniques as retailers like Amazon or services such as Netflix.

"People are expecting alerts for news that is important to them," Doctor said.

"And I would think the ability of wearables to deliver alerts is very good and that it could spur news reading."

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