

Apple's next big thing aims for wrists (Update 2)

March 9 2015



Apple CEO Tim Cook announces the Apple Watch during an Apple special event at the Yerba Buena Center for the Arts on March 9, 2015, in San Francisco, California

Apple aims to have its smart watch on wrists in China, the US and beyond in April, and ignite its first new gadget category since the debut of the iPad.

The Apple Watch will be available in nine countries from April 24, at a

starting price of \$349. A limited edition gold Apple Watch will be available with a price topping \$10,000.

"Apple Watch begins a new chapter in the way we relate to technology," said chief executive Tim Cook, [who starred at an Apple Watch media event](#) in San Francisco on Monday.

Cook said "the most personal device we have ever created" can display a variety of displays ranging from a classic watch face to an animated Mickey Mouse.

Connecting wirelessly to a user's iPhone, the watch is designed as a wrist device for messaging, calls and a cornucopia of apps, especially those geared toward health or fitness.

Users can send a real-time display of their heartbeat to another Apple Watch to "let someone know you are thinking about them."

"I hope someone sends me one of those," quipped Cook.

Float all boats

Apple enters a market that has a number of players, ranging from South Korean giants Samsung and LG, to Japan's Sony and startups such as Pebble.

But analysts expect Apple to invigorate the market by integrating the watch with the iPhone and its mighty software ecosystem.

"Apple will outsell all the rest of them combined in 2015," said Forrester analyst James McQuivey.

"But in so doing, Apple will bring very valuable attention to the market,

essentially releasing a rising tide that will float all their boats."

Apple Watch offers a range of communication apps and can be used as a sort of wrist-radio from the Dick Tracy comics.

"With the built in speaker and microphone, you can receive calls on your watch. I have been wanting to do this since I was five years old," Cook said.



A screen shot of the new Apple Watch after Apple chief executive Tim Cook unveiled it during a media event March 9, 2015, in San Francisco, California

Pay from the wrist

The watch is integrated with Apple Pay's mobile wallet and can be used to view pictures, monitor news and connect to social media.

Apple said that the ranks of businesses accepting Apple Pay is booming, and that it recently sold its 700 millionth iPhone.

"Now it's on your wrist, not in your pocket or your pocketbook," Cook said.

Apple demonstrated using the watch to find out lyrics to songs being heard, remotely opening home doors and displaying barcodes that act as airline boarding passes.

But a key focus was health and fitness applications.

The watch has an accelerometer, a heart rate sensor and sensors for "a comprehensive picture of your all-day activity and workouts."

It will prompt a user to get up and walk if sedentary too long.

All-day battery

Cook boasted that the device will have "all-day battery life"—or some 18 hours.

Entry price will be \$349 in the United States, with the price climbing through three style categories, the top being the luxury gold model.



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Initially, it will be available in Australia, Britain, Canada, China, France, Germany, Hong Kong, Japan and the United States. Pre-orders will be taken from April 10.

Moor Insights and Strategy founder Patrick Moorhead, who attended the event, said "the secret weapon here is the ability to message each other by tapping on the watch, I think people, particularly kids, are going to go nuts over that."

"Apple has a big chance of success, and what that is going to do is set the bar for the (smartwatch) experience," he added.

Jan Dawson at Jackdaw Research said he expects Apple to sell around 20 million of the devices this year, which will "catalyze the overall smartwatch market and help other vendors even as Apple comes to enjoy levels of market share it hasn't had since the iPod."

Game of Thrones

At the event, Apple unveiled a new Macbook laptop computer that weighs less than one kilogram (two pounds).

The new MacBook starting at \$1,299 is 0.5 inches (13.1 millimeters) at its thickest point, and its features include all-day battery life, a high-resolution 12-inch (30-centimeter) edge-to-edge screen and greatly-enhanced keyboard and trackpad.

Apple also announced that it cut the price of its Apple TV set-top box to \$69 and that the service will next month handle the exclusive launch of an HBO Now streaming movie service.

Known for shows like "Game of Thrones" and "Boardwalk Empire," HBO enters the streaming-only video market dominated by Netflix as part of a partnership with the California tech giant.

The service called HBO Now will cost \$14.99 per month and launch in April.

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