

Apple Watch app ecosystem will be key to success

by [Dan Worth](#)

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The Apple Watch is on its way. After months, if not years, of speculation, rumour and intrigue, the device will be in the shops, and on people's wrists, by the end of April.

[Prices for the Apple Watch range from £399 to a staggering £13,500](#), showing that Apple clearly has big ambitions, seemingly pitching it not just as a technology accessory for the iPhone but as a lifestyle item that happens to include technological functions.

For those with money to burn, this mix of Apple's brand allure, a focus on luxury and the high price tag will be all the reasons they need to splash out.

But for those with as much sense as money, the reason to buy an Apple Watch may remain unclear.

Indeed, the keynote on Monday was notable for what little information about Apple Watch was new since its unveiling in September. Perhaps the fact that battery life should be 18 hours was the only major addition to the spec sheet.

A sigh of relief

Forrester analyst James McQuivey suggested that the lack of any surprising or exciting new features will be a relief to Apple's rivals.

"Competitors will be relieved that Apple didn't really surprise anyone with its features," he said.

"Samsung and Motorola don't have to worry that Apple has leapfrogged them in many functional ways. The [Moto 360](#), for example, already does most of what Apple showed today, though sometimes the user has to go looking for those features."

Francisco Jeronimo from IDC echoed this point, saying that Apple did not provide a convincing argument for why the Apple Watch is a 'must have' product.

"They haven't shown why this category will disrupt our lives, and why it is important, apart from being an extension to our phones (or iPhones in this case)," he said.

However, while the focus on features did not provide any 'wow' moments, the demo of the apps that will be available, from airport check-in to Shazam for music, was notable, giving a glimpse into some practical uses for the device.

Jeronimo explained that this will be fundamental to the success of the Apple Watch.

"What was very clear is that disruption [of the wearable market] will not come from specific features that Apple will bring to the watch, but by enabling developers to add value through their apps," he said.

"In the end, similar to a smartphone or a tablet, what will make smartwatches relevant are the apps. And what will make them appealing is the design and the quality of the hardware that runs those apps."

Business benefits?

Most of the apps shown off during the keynote were consumer focused, but there was a brief mention of Salesforce and the ability to view sales data on the Apple Watch face.



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Salesforce Analytics Cloud apps will be available on the device (*pictured*

:customers, partners, employees and even products in a whole new way,"

However, Robert Desisto, research vice president at Gartner, is less convinced of the benefits of a CRM app on your wrist.

"I question if there is any real compelling use cases for salespeople. I could see alerts being important, but the idea of a salesperson reading email, checking the status of sales opportunities, or trying to navigate some report in a screen a little bigger than a quarter seems like a stretch," [he wrote in a blog post](#).

He admitted that the same scepticism greeted the iPhone and iPad, but said that, while there were some clear use cases for those devices, such as email, contacts, maps, texting, web browsing and so forth, the Apple Watch is less clear cut.

"I just don't see salespeople rushing to buy Apple Watches to help them sell to customers," he said.

Wearables revolution

Salespeople may not rush to buy the device for the CRM apps, but it is highly likely that millions of people will buy it, regardless of whether they can point to a compelling use case.

Analyst predictions for Apple Watch sales in 2015 range from 10 to 20 million, and this will have a knock-on effect for the wider wearables market.

"Apple will bring very valuable attention to the market, essentially releasing a rising tide that will float all boats," said McQuivey.

This sentiment was echoed by Jeronimo: "Apple has launched the first product of the next big revolution, the wearables revolution."

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