

## THE CONVERSATION

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The many colours of the Apple Watch. EPA/Kay Nietfeld

# Technology and fashion converge in the Apple Watch

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Apple's ability to mesh technology with beautiful design will be put to the test when it finally releases the much-anticipated [Apple Watch](#). The tech giant is taking a super-advanced piece of technology and packaging it as a fashion statement.

Although the iPhone-compatible wearable watch is still more than a month from its official release date, the hype is building among Apple enthusiasts and fashionistas alike as they anticipate the first product Apple has designed to be worn.

On April 24 this year, the new smartwatch will find its way on to store shelves in a dazzling variety of colours and styles to trump even the options for the iPhone 6 and 6 Plus. There will be 38 Apple Watch choices with a range of changeable faces – including an animated Mickey Mouse face. Apple says the watch is designed to be “highly customisable for personal expression”, allowing the owner to make a unique statement.

The watch is all about personalisation, even more so than previous Apple products, which have sported various colour possibilities plus the option of engraving the iPhone, iPod and iPad, which will also be available for the watch. With six band types and 18 interchangeable colours, you can don the sport band for a gym session and switch effortlessly to the Milanese loop for a night out.

## **Wearable technology**

But is the world ready for wearable technology? We can hardly forget the moment when fashion designer Diane von Furstenberg put Google Glass on the runway in 2012.

But the Google Glass project is currently on hold. This head-mounted optical display was seen as somewhat dorky, giving rise to the opinion that technology belongs on our desks and not on our bodies.

So the question remains: will the Apple Watch succeed as a fashion item in a way that Google Glass has not? The emphasis on creating a fashionable product is readily apparent, with Apple leaning heavily on fashion insiders and retail gurus throughout the development phase. Apple is betting big on the success of its watch.

Apple's senior vice president of design, Jony Ive, even introduced the device to iconic designer Karl Lagerfeld and a 12-page spread is reportedly being prepared for Vogue.

In case we needed further evidence that Apple is taking the fashion aspect seriously, super model Christy Turlington Burns appeared alongside Apple CEO Tim Cook to spruik the watch. She went so far as to call the Apple Watch a chic fashion accessory at the official launch.

## **The price of design**

Given the emphasis on luxury, it is perhaps not surprising that the Apple Watch comes with a designer price tag for the 18-karat solid gold edition, which also has a top-of-the-line computer inside it. Apple says prices for these top-of-the-range models start from A\$14,000.

For those of us who are not prepared to take out a loan on what is essentially a piece of jewellery, the entry-level Apple Watch Sport with its aluminium body and rubber strap starts at A\$499 for the 38mm version and A\$579 for the 42mm.

One step up from there is the Apple Watch, which has a A\$799 or A\$879 price tag for the 38mm and 42mm versions respectively.

Depending on the band you choose, be it classic leather or the Milanese loop, expect to pay up to A\$1629. Apple has never been shy of setting premium prices.

## **What can the watch do?**

Given the hefty price tag, you may well be inclined to ask: what does the Apple Watch actually do (after telling you the time)? Quite simply, the watch aims to get us moving.

Like the Fitbit -- an early leader in the fitness tracking market -- the Apple Watch is an activity tracker that counts our steps and measures our heart rate. And let's not forget, it's also a timekeeper and rather novel communication device.

Despite similar products on the market, Apple is betting that it can do it better, thanks to its ecosystem of hardware, software and services. Coupled with a loyal fan base and the watch's status as a fashion item, Apple is likely to be on to another winner in terms of sales.

But despite its potential to help us achieve our fitness goals and perhaps curb obesity rates in Australia (three in five adults and one in four Aussies children are overweight), will we see Apple move from a well-loved consumer brand to the next big name in fashion?

There does seem to be a convergence of technology with fashion.