

Microsoft Details Wearable Plans

Written by Marco Attard
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Microsoft confirms its wearable device ambitions and announces Health, a health and fitness platform complete with cloud service, mobile device app and, of course, a fitness wearable dubbed "Band."



News on Microsoft's wearable device [emerged last week via Forbes and The Verge](#) , although rumours on the company working on such a device date as far back as May 2013.

The Microsoft Band, like its name, is a simple enough device. Described as a "smart band," it is designed for 24/7 use and features 10 sensors, including an optical heart rate monitor, 3-axis accelerometer, gyroscope, GPS, ambient light, UV light and more.

Battery life-- arguably the most important feature of any wearable device-- clocks at 48 hours of "normal use" via twin 100mAh batteries, although the GPS probably shortens it. Charging takes 1.5 hours via magnetically attached USB charger.

A 1.4-inch touchscreen provides "smart" alerts for emails, SMS and social networks, and a built-in microphone allows use with the Cortana Windows Phone voice assistant. Smartphone connectivity comes through Bluetooth LE, and, interestingly, the wearable is cross-platform, being compatible with Windows Phone, iOS or Android devices.

The data gathered by the Band is obviously pushed to an fitness service, in this case Health-- a combination of app and cloud service providing users with "insights" on their fitness regime

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based on steps taken, calories burned, heart rate and more. Interestingly the cloud service can also be allowed to access other Microsoft products, such as Office, in order to glean even more insight (such as whether the amount of meetings affects the wearer's sleep quality).

Health also works with other fitness services, namely Jawbone's UP, MapMyFitness, MyFitnessPal and RunKeeper, and Microsoft plans to release more details on service partnerships and SDK availability in the future.

The Band will be available by end October 2014 in the US, with no word (so far) of European availability.

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