

Digital wellbeing study relies on Google health and wearables ecosystem

Article

The news: The University of Oregon's Center for Digital Mental Health launched a new digital wellbeing study that relies on **Android** and **Fitbit** devices via the **Google Health Studies app**, [per](#) 9to5Google.

- Researchers are using wearable sensors on consumer devices as an alternative to “heavily subjective” self-reported questionnaires to evaluate tech’s impact on health factors like sleep.

Why it's worth watching: Just as Google seems to be [redoubling efforts in smartwatch and health tracking initiatives](#), the University of Oregon's study hinges on Google tech to collect data using "passive and continuous sensing technology."

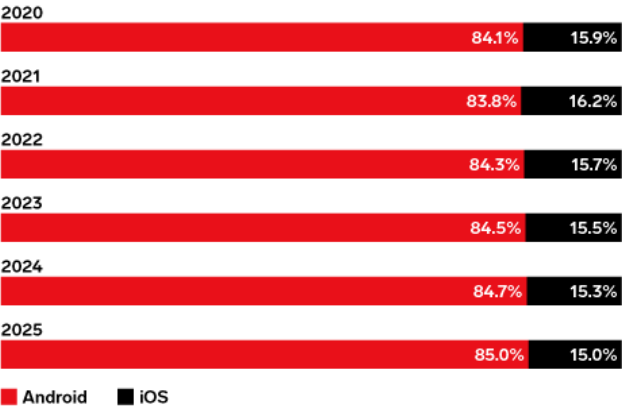
- The Google Health Studies app uses surveys to "recruit a large representative sample and collect direct, objective measures of how people use their phones, with their informed consent."
- The [study](#) measures sleep and physical activity via smartphones. Most notably, how time spent looking at screens affects the respondent's sleep.
- The study is open to adults in the US who have Android phones and are able to complete daily tasks without assistance.
- **Fitbit** users can optionally add step counts and activity data for the four weeks during when the study is being conducted.
- Results of the study will appear in the Google Health Studies app on Friday, May 27.
- This is the latest digital health initiative involving Google, which recently teamed up with the **World Health Organization** to lay the groundwork for [health app development](#).

The opportunity: Coming from behind in wearables and health tracking ecosystems, Google can use studies like this to promote its technology as well as improve its cachet in the wellbeing and health industries.

- Platform rival and smartwatch market leader **Apple**, has been using its **Watch** and Health in various [studies](#) to prove its tech can be used as a viable research tool. It has also been developing the [HealthKit](#) data collection platform.
- Apple allows anyone to participate in health studies using their Apple Watch and has already engaged in studies with organizations like **Harvard University**, the **American Heart Association**, and WHO.
- Google's advantage over Apple is its [much larger pool of Android smartphone users](#) globally, even if it currently falls behind in smartwatches and fitness trackers, which could help give more specific health data.

Smartphone Shipment Share Worldwide, by OS,
2020-2025

% of total



Source: International Data Corporation (IDC), April 28, 2021

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