

Wearables Still Far from Mass Adoption

Less than 20% of the US population will use one next year

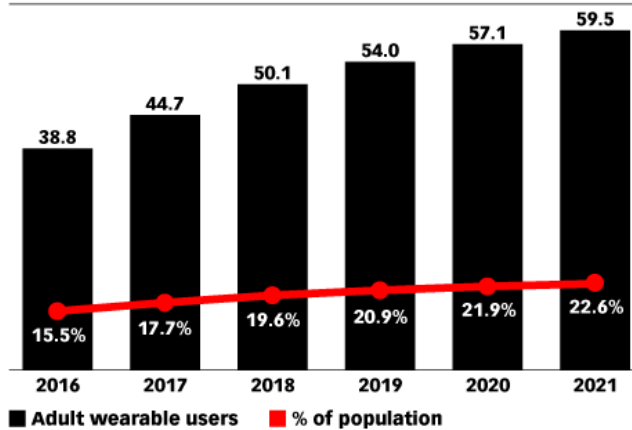
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eMarketer Editors

Smart speakers will likely beat out wearable devices as the electronic gift of choice this holiday season. Even the introduction of several new smartwatches to the market this year has done little to reinvigorate demand for wearables.

According to eMarketer's latest forecast, the number of adult wearable users in the US will grow 11.9% in 2018. This comes one year after eMarketer significantly downgraded its projections for wearable usage.

US Adult Wearable Users and Penetration, 2016-2021
 millions and % of population



Note: at least once per month; individuals ages 18+ who wear accessories or clothing embedded with electronics, software or sensors that have the ability to connect to the internet (via built-in connectivity or tethering), which in turn collects and exchanges data with a manufacturer, operator or other connected devices
 Source: eMarketer, Dec 2017

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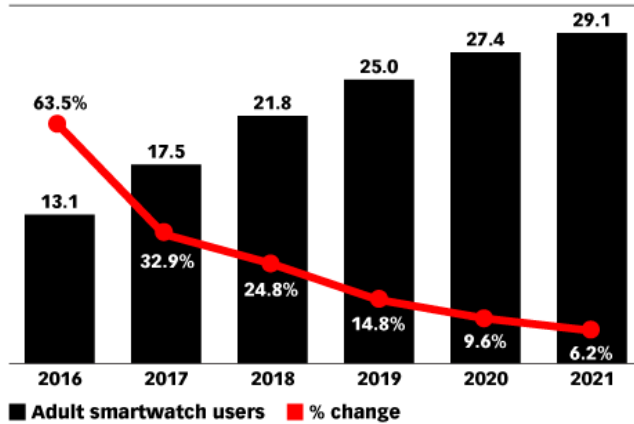
“Consumers have yet to find a reason to justify the cost of a smartwatch, which can sometimes cost as much as a smartphone,” said eMarketer forecasting analyst Cindy Liu. “Instead, for this holiday season, we expect smart speakers to be the gift of choice for many tech enthusiasts, because of their lower price points.”

Next year, eMarketer expects 50.1 million US adults will use some type of wearable device* at least once a month, representing 19.6% of the population. Wearable usage will continue to grow over the forecast period, but the rate will slow to single digits beginning in 2019.

“Any growth that we will see in wearable users will primarily come from new users of smartwatches,” said Liu. “However, the wearables market overall is still dominated by health and fitness trackers. We really haven’t seen a wearable device become the next must-have item. Until then, growth will remain conservative.”

US Adult Smartwatch Users, 2016-2021

millions and % change



Note: at least once per month; individuals ages 18+ who wear a wrist-worn, touchscreen device that uses wireless technology (via built-in connectivity or Bluetooth) and can support third-party applications; smartwatch functions can include receiving notifications and texts, making calls, GPS navigation, mobile payments, and playing music and video; excludes fitness bands
Source: eMarketer, Dec 2017

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In its first breakout of smartwatch users, eMarketer projects the number of US adult smartwatch users will reach 21.8 million in 2018, up 24.8% over 2017. More men tend to use smartwatches, while more women use fitness trackers.