Amazon Halo rolls out new feature—here's how it fits into Big Tech's wearables push

Article

Amazon's wearable, **Halo,** launched a new functionality that measures movement and flexibility using a smartphone camera and cloud-based AI. This adds to Halo's existing suite of

health tracking measures, which includes body fat, sleep activity, and tone of voice. Users take pictures of themselves in different poses for 5–10 minutes so the Movement Health algorithm can analyze their postures. The data is then used to create customized workout routines to improve stability, mobility, and posture.

Amazon's wearables play melds well with its healthcare push:

- Amazon Halo's health tracking could be an upsell feature that pairs with its virtual care business (Amazon Care).

- It could even have applications in digital therapeutics (DTx), helping users improve mobility and chronic pain like Hinge Health does.

Here's how Amazon Halo contrasts with its competitors' wearables:

- **Apple's Watch boasts robust health tracking on top of a fitness subscription:** Apple released its Series 6 iteration with a new blood oxygen monitoring feature and a new sleep-tracking feature, and it's being used in a slew of clinical studies for COVID-19 detection, heart failure, and asthma.

- **Google has been growing its Fitbit wearables business and smartphone-based health tracking features:** In February, Google Health rolled out new health tracking features via the Google Fit app that use machine learning to track heart and respiratory rates using just an Android smartphone camera—introducing health tracking to users who don't own wearables. And before that, Google-owned Fitbit launched its newest wearable geared toward children, the Fitbit Ace 3.

- **Samsung teamed up with Livmor's Halo wearable and remote patient monitoring platform** to give clinicians greater data insights and help them deliver effective and timely care from afar.

- **Unlike its competitors, Amazon doesn't have a proprietary smartphone to lean on**—which is probably why it's relying more heavily on unique health tracking functionalities like measuring body fat and voice tone. While Apple can leverage its iPhone users and Google and Samsung can tap Android users when marketing their health tracking products, Amazon has to play up its value proposition to compete with the likes of Apple and Google to capture smartphone users willing to use a third-party wearable.

Big Tech could harness wearables to dive into the growing remote patient monitoring (RPM) market:

- The smartwatch boom coincides with a growing RPM market—creating the perfect storm for Big Tech RPM disruption. 21% of US adults already use a smartwatch—and we expect there to be more than 30 million RPM users by 2024, up from 23.4 million in 2020.

- Some firms have already dabbled with health system RPM initiatives: In December 2020, **New York's Hospital for Special Surgery** tapped the **Apple Watch** to track health and manage post-acute care for patients in the comfort of their homes. And in April, the US **Department of Veteran Affairs (VA)** partnered with **Samsung** and **Livmor** to roll out a remote patient care platform for cardiology.

But there's still uncertainty regarding how Halo's Movement Health algorithm is trained—and consumers are wary of Big Tech handling of their health data. Just 11% of consumers trust Big Tech with their health data, per Rock Health. When Google bought Fitbit in 2020, government regulators and consumer advocacy groups raised concerns about Big Tech reaching into consumers' health data—citing how companies could amass health data sets and potentially exploit them for monetary gain.

US Adults' Willingness to Share Health Data* with Select Entities, 2017-2020
% of respondents

	2017	2018	2019	2020
Their physician	86%	72%	73%	72%
Their health insurance company	56%	49%	52%	53%
Their pharmacy	52%	47%	48%	46%
Research institution	44%	35%	34%	35%
Health tech company	-	23%	23%	25%
Pharmaceutical company	21%	20%	19%	22%
Government organization	13%	13%	12%	12%
Tech company	10%	11%	10%	11%
Family	-	-	55%	52%
Employer	-	-	-	15%

Note: 2017=3,997; 2018 n=4,000; 2019 n=4,000; 2020 n=7,980; ages 18+; *medical records, test results, prescription drug history, genetic information, and physical activity data
Source: Rock Health and Stanford Center for Digital Health, "Digital Health Consumer Adoption Report 2020" conducted by Toluna USA, March 2020

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