What If the Moto 360 Really Does Change the Game?

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While it’s still early in the smartwatch game, the game’s already been changed so many times that likely nobody remembers what game we’re playing.

The Moto 360, the newest smartwatch to enter the arena, is Motorola’s first shot at Google’s new Android Wear OS. And the company made it almost all the way through the 360’s two-minute promo video [1] without using the words “game-changer.” But then, right at the end, BAM. Game. Changed.

The 360 looks like a fine watch and its round face really does remind me of a classic timepiece. Combine the compelling design with the excitement of being first out of the box with Android Wear and you can forgive development team members for eagerly declaring the game changed.

Somewhat less exciting in terms of design but nevertheless someone’s idea of a game-changer, LG announced its G Watch, running Android Wear, for release soon.

But here’s the thing: if a smartwatch really can sub in for my smartphone and effectively change the game of having an excuse to look at my smartphone, then I don’t want the game changed.

A smartphone is a security blanket. It’s a way to look involved in something when you have no idea what you’re doing. It’s a cool way to avoid interacting with people. If I wear a smartwatch and it sends me notifications, in my mind it’s taking away a legitimate reason to take out my phone. My security blanket is gone.

That doesn’t mean I want to live in a world where no more games remain to be changed. Or even that I will never own a smartwatch.

When Google releases the official Android Wear SDK, smartwatch capabilities will move beyond mimicking what a phone can do and will open up. You’ve got to admit, when the woman riding a bike at the end of the Android Wear promo video tells her watch to open the garage, it’s awesome. With Samsung moving its Galaxy Gear line over to the Tizen operating system that means the OEM will be competing with Google to attract developers and that will likely spell innovation.

But as we wait for a smartwatch to come along with truly innovative functionality—and honor each new entry as the fabled game-changer—I’ll keep my game the same. Because I’ve yet to see a smartwatch with game-changing potential and really, I like the game the way it is.

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[1] https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dnerqDWwVgg