5 trending wearables in 2023 to look out for
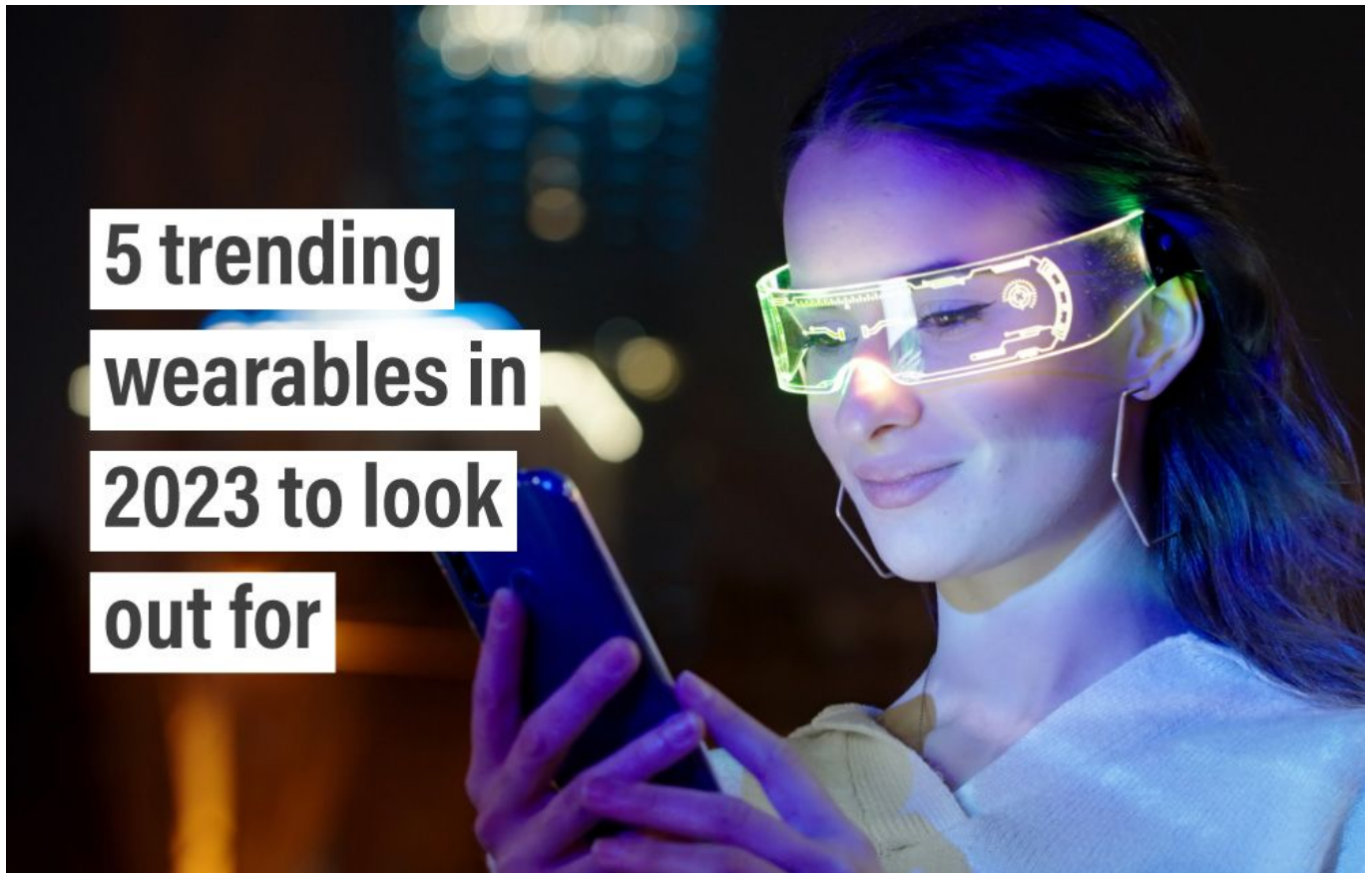

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Reading time 6 mins

Key Points

1. Technologies embedded into clothing and accessories have opened up the space for devices with more functionality
2. Augmented and Virtual Reality are forecast to continue growing at a global annual rate of 32.3% to reach $50.9 billion by 2026
3. E-textiles will soon start competing with wearable devices that have been dominating the market (e.g. smartwatches and fitness trackers)
4. More advanced Artificial Intelligence capabilities are being added to existing products, e.g. AI-powered fitness apps
5. Hearable devices (one-part hearing aid, one-part headset) with features such as biometric, proximity, and movement sensors

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Ben Mazur

Managing Director

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Last year we covered numerous aspects of wearable technologies and examined various topics, from data protection and consumer consent to haptic technologies and how wearables improve healthcare administration. We wanted to see whether wearables have a meaningful impact or are simply a passing trend. We concluded that while some challenges (e.g. data security, e-waste management) still need to be overcome, the future of wearables is bright and booming. Here are five trending wearables in 2023 we'll be keeping an eye on:

1. Embedded technology

2. Augmented and virtual reality

3. Smart fabrics and textiles

4. Artificial Intelligence

5. Hearables

Wearable Trend #1: Embedded Technology

Embeddable technology is an exciting new development: sensors and processors can be embedded into clothing or accessories to provide extra functionality. This removes the need for bulky external components, making them more comfortable to use and easily integrated into everyday life. Devices that don't yet contain embedded computer technology will likely have one soon. Some of the most exciting software trends that developers and device engineers will want to keep tabs on include:

- Container adoption
- Fresh debates on which programing language is best (i.e. C++ vs Rust)

- A focus on security to ensure IoT-based devices are safe from remote attacks
- Adoption of Agile methodologies
- Multicore microcontrollers

Trend 2: Augmented & Virtual Reality

Augmented reality (AR) and virtual reality (VR) technologies have existed for a few years, but their use in the wearable space is still relatively untapped. Over the next few years, expect to see these combined with other devices, such as smartwatches, glasses or headphones.

The International Data Corporation (IDC Worldwide) latest AR/VR market review and forecasts recorded industry earnings of $13.8 billion in 2022, predicting a 32.3% compound annual growth rate to reach $50.9 billion by 2026. This significant growth rate explains why industries such as healthcare, retail, oil and gas, and manufacturing have been quick to adopt it. Trending wearables in 2023 incorporating AR, VR, and mixed reality technologies will involve:

- More growth in the Metaverse (e.g. virtual events being held in physical locations)
- AR and AI (artificial intelligence) are becoming closer intertwined
- AR navigation is being used to improve GPS systems
- AR headsets that are lightweight and meet user expectations regarding functionality and cost

Trend 3: Smart Fabrics & Textiles

Smart fabrics and electronic textiles (e-textiles) are an interesting development: they integrate electronics within the fabric itself, which can then be used for sensing or communication purposes. This opens up a world of possibilities for creating interactive garments or even smart shoes! Last year, we uncovered the opportunities in wearable electronics – especially regarding wearable pharmaceuticals and the benefits of using e-textiles to enhance healthcare.

The applications for this technology continue to grow, placing smart fabrics at the top of our list of trending wearables in 2023 to keep an eye on. A report published by GlobeNewswire (one of the world's largest market research sites) forecasts that e-textiles will soon start competing with wearable devices that have been dominating the market (e.g. smartwatches and fitness trackers) as they are a more discreet alternative to health and physiological monitoring.

Trend 4: AI Integration

AI integration has long been an area of focus in the wearables industry – with big players such as Google and Apple leading the charge when it comes to voice-activated interactions between users and devices. As a trending wearable in 2023, expect to see more advanced AI capabilities added to existing products and new ones entering the fray. For example, AI-powered [fitness apps such as ArtiFit](#) offer customised 'smart' workouts that adapt to the user's needs in real time.

Trend 5: Hearables

[Hearables](#) are devices that are one-part hearing-aid and one-part headphone. Typically, these devices are Bluetooth streaming with hearing-aid functionality or health-tracking information. The declassification of hearing aids as medical devices in many countries opened up a range of opportunities: not only can they be sold over the counter, but less stringent regulations have also boosted innovation!

As a trending wearable in 2023, expect to see [hearables with](#) biometric, proximity, movement and other sensors that enable them to gather contextual information about the user. This will allow them to perform various functions, such as:

- Heart rate tracking with voice-based personal assistants
- Contextual location-based suggestions
- Environment-based noise suppression and audio enhancement
- Gesture and touch-based control

Our final thoughts on trending wearables in 2023

As wearable technology continues its rapid evolution – these five trends outlined above offer insight into what we might expect to see over the coming year. At the same time, for inventors, entrepreneurs, and device developers interested in getting involved with wearables, there's a massive range of opportunities to explore!

Which trending wearables in 2023 are you the most excited about?

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