WEARABLE TECHNOLOGY

With technology constantly on the rise, it was only a matter of time before it delved into jewellery aesthetics and function and begun influencing the jewellery industry. Jewellery takes a look at the world of wearable technology.
A few years ago the world’s biggest watchmaker, Swatch group, denounced smart watches and the use of incorporating technological aspects with jewellery. However, in a show of the times, the Swiss watchmakers have retracted their earlier statement, announcing they will add fitness features to their 2015 watch line up. The move has widely been seen as a calculated bid to stave off growing competition from the smart watch sector.

Smart watches entered the market a few years ago, offering wearers internet-enabled timepieces. The innovation allows wearers to sync their watches to their phones, download apps and receive notifications. Many smart watches also offer the ability to run android or IOS software. Their functionality is ever evolving, with Samsung, arguably the current leader of smart watches, offering over 1000 apps for their Gear family of smart watches.

Technology giants have followed suit and are on the brink of entering the market. Apple publicly unveiled their Apple Watch in September, a device that boasts the ability to control music on other apple devices, work apple TV, unlock your hotel room and find where you parked your BMW. While reports have surfaced that Microsoft are also in the midst of developing one under their brand.

Experts have expressed the possibility that the smart watch could be the biggest challenge for the industry since digital watches upended the market.

But smart watches are not without their competition. They face challenges from fitness trackers, wristbands that have watch capabilities while also tracking the wearer’s movement and sleep patterns.

Online electronics retailers Kogan have made the jump, launching their own fitness tracker the Fortis TrackFit this year. Their fitness tracker records current time, sleep length, sleep quality, steps taken, calories burned, distance travelled, activity time and daily target progress percentage. The device stores data for up to 15 days and can upload the information to a computer in the form of charts and graphs so the wearer can map their progress.

Fitness trackers are the fastest growing category of wearable devices and show no signs of slowing down. Their ability to offer more functions than a regular watch and appeal to the health conscious propels interest in their product to a larger market.

According to CCS Insight 22 million wearable devices will be shipped this year, which is more than double last years figures. Wrist-worn devices are estimated to account for 87% of that figure.