



! Futuristic Flaws

Wearable technology not ready for primetime

BY NICK BILTON

The junk drawer in my home used to look just like yours, filled with loose change, batteries and birthday candles. But over the last year, a new category of junk has started to accumulate there: wearable devices.

There's my old Fitbit, a fitness tracker I used for a couple of weeks, forgot to charge and never wore again. It sits next to a dusty Jawbone UP, another tracker that once told me I had walked three miles while I sat on my couch eating popcorn and watching a movie. And then there's the Apple Watch, the much-hyped device that was supposed to usher in a new era of mobile computing.

Instead, these gadgets are ending up in drawers and closets as expensive reminders of how wearable gadgets are not ready for prime time — at least for the foreseeable future.

Like others, I once believed that wearables were going to change the way we live. In much the way that smartphones put the Internet into our pockets, wearable devices were going to place information that much closer to our fingertips, and make us healthier and less dependent on our smartphones.

I wasn't alone in the belief that these technologies were going to transform our lives for the better. Many analysts predicted that wearables would become widely adopted, in one form or another. Two years ago, BI Intelligence, a research division of Business Insider, predicted that by 2018, Google Glass would be an \$11 billion business. A report by ABI Research, a technology market research firm, said that by 2018, people would be buying almost half a billion wearables a year.