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A Tale of Two Watches

This month, we compare the Apple Watch to Android Wear watches. This is really more of a comparison of Android Wear software and Apple Watch software and their respective interaction with a tethered smartphone.



BILL & PHIL

*The Bill and Phil Show
Tech News & Reviews*

There are several Android Wear watch models. Bill has compared his LG G Watch to his Apple Watch. Phillip compared his Moto Smartwatch to Bills' Apple Watch. Unfortunately, neither of us has the LG Watch Urbane, the only Android Wear Smartwatch that runs the latest version of Android. That watch has features that rival, and sometimes exceed, those of its trendy Apple rival.

Both types of watches have numerous functions that are the same, or very similar. For example, you can answer telephone calls on your Apple Watch; you can answer telephone calls on most Android watches. You can track fitness and health data with both types of watches. You can read and review texts and emails on both types of watches. You can listen to voicemails and look at your calendar on both, too. Each of these watches provide a plethora of notifications. However, the actual functionality of these features can vary significantly.

Given the functionality of both types of watches, you will immediately be recognized as having the ultimate in "geeky cool" when wearing a smartwatch on your wrist. Your friends will be so jealous ... just don't get a tattoo on the wrist where you sport your Apple Watch. (Apparently, a tattoo interferes with some of the Apple Heath-app functionality. (I guess Bill shouldn't have gotten that "I Heart Apple" tattoo last year.)

It's the app area that the Apple Watch has a distinct advantage — there are many more available on the Apple Watch, and they can be customized easily.

P.S. THEY ALSO TELL TIME

Not surprisingly, you can tell time on both watches. There is not a whole lot of difference between the two types of watches in this area. They are watches, after all. Both have watch-face patterns that are highly customizable. Along with the time, the watch faces can be customized to show additional information such as date, weather, remaining battery life, appointments, etc. Android watches probably have more options for actual watch faces, but both have a wide variety available.

Probably the area of greatest difference is how each watch deals with notifications. On Android watches, notifications show up as Google cards that are in a list as they are received. You can dismiss each one of them with a swipe, or you can tap on the item to open it up and/or open it up in the relevant application on the phone itself. The Apple Watch handles notifications differently

and is not quite as intrusive. The notifications appear briefly on the display, and then go away. If you want to see them, you find them with a swipe down from the top, and then you can dismiss them. Most notifications can be responded to directly from the Apple Watch itself by using voice dictation or a preset message.

Both types of watches accept voice commands. The Apple Watch accepts commands through Siri. The Android accepts commands via OK Google. Both voice command systems work very well. You can ask your watch for directions, via either Google Now or Siri, and turn-by-turn directions and a map will appear on your smartwatch. This feature can become very handy while you are walking down the street or, if you are careful, while you are driving.

There's a wide variety of applications that are available for both watches, including fitness tracking for calories burned, heart rate monitoring and steps taken. (Apple even tells you to stand up if it thinks you have been idle too long.) Both watches have email, calendar, OneNote and Evernote.

It's the app area that the Apple Watch has a distinct advantage — there are many more available on the Apple Watch, and they can be customized easily. You can also push down the bezel on the right side of the Apple Watch, and it will open up a screen with all of your applications on it. You also can rotate the bezel to make the icons larger so they are easier to select. You can pay for items with Apple Pay on your Apple Watch; you can order an Uber ride; you can play music directly from your iTunes library, and so on.

Because of the distinct advantage the Apple Watch has in the application area — and the simplicity of customizing which applications are available — Bill prefers the Apple Watch to any of the Android watches he has seen. Phillip (the Apple “hater”), on the other hand, believes that very soon the Android watches will overtake the Apple Watch in functionality because Android is an open platform and allows for more rapid development. For example, Android 5.1 Lollipop allows Wi-Fi support so that your watch can sync to your phone via Wi-Fi without a Bluetooth connection.

Time will tell — no pun intended. But for now, Apple is clearly in the lead. The Apple Watch has outsold all of the varieties and flavors of Android watches combined.

One year ago, Bill swore he would never wear something as silly as a smartwatch. Now, he is wearing two at a time, and he loves them both. If we are any indication of the future, soon there will be as many smartwatches out there as there are smartphones.

ABOUT THE AUTHORS

William Ramsey, Partner at Neal & Harwell, and LogicForce Consulting President **Phil Hampton** are best known for The Bill and Phil Show. The duo tours often and provides technology news and reviews on their website www.thebillandphilshow.com.

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