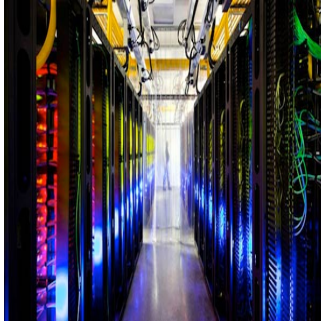


Google 'Fit' Wants Your Health Data



When developers meet later this month at the Google I/O conference in San Francisco, they can expect to hear more about the company's plans to challenge Apple's recently-released HealthKit framework with its new Google Fit. The health service will collect and combine data from electronic health devices and apps, positioning the company for competition with tech industry leaders Apple and Samsung, which last month launched its own health platform called Sami.

According to those with knowledge of the company's plans, Google Fit will gather data from wearable devices, such as those that measure a user's footsteps, heart rate or temperature and integrate them with Google's cloud-based services. It remains to be seen whether Google Fit will be a downloadable app or a service that is built in to an upcoming version of Android. Either way, the Google Fit ecosystem will be another hub for data collected from the sensors on wearable health devices.

An Increasingly Competitive Marketplace

Google will be in stiff competition with other tech companies in the mobile health marketplace. Apple's HealthKit currently offers a framework that allows data to be sent from health apps and wearable devices to a distinct Apple app, Health. Not only can users store and track information related to physical activity, sleep patterns and other biodynamic data, but outside apps could ask for permission to access Health. Forbes recently reported that Microsoft is expected to compete later this year with a smart watch that can track continuous heart rate; plans for a health data platform are unclear.

Apple and Microsoft are not the only players challenging Google. Top vendor Samsung has made continuous efforts to become less dependent on Google software. Android for Samsung's Galaxy smartphones has been customised away from Google programs, and similar re-engineering could enable Samsung to replace Google Fit with Sami if the newest version of Android contains the Google Fit platform. Meanwhile, Samsung's updated smart watch, Gear, now runs on Tizen and Gear Fit runs on a low-powered operating system built by Samsung.

Past Challenges Drive Innovation

Google's previous venture into the health field, Google Health, was discontinued in 2012, presumably because consumers were not interested in aggregating data onto a health portal without having some meaning and feedback as a result. It has been a tough road leading up to the creation of its newest health platform, but one of the hurdles Google Fit strives to overcome is how to provide the feedback valued by customers, without violating any privacy laws and FDA regulations about health diagnoses.

It is not the only challenge that Google will face, despite the domination of Android over Apple in the smartphone marketplace. However, it will not be alone in the struggle: the company's new partnerships with makers of wearable devices are expected to be announced at the upcoming I/O conference, scheduled for 25 and 26 June 2014.

[Source: Forbes](#)

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