



By [Claire Carlson](#)

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If you've ever been to a major sporting event you've seen a "fan cam" video segment on the big screen. Last weekend I went to the University of Washington football game and saw all kinds of people featured on the fan cam just as I usually do - the little kids who feel famous, the cheering students, the parents who love to embarrass their kids. This time there was a new kind of person - the oblivious smartphone user. While most jump for joy when they realize they made it on the big screen, smartphone enthusiasts miss out on the experience altogether, never taking their eyes away from their phones.



Seeing this made me wonder what the future of the fan cam will be like in the Apple Watch era. How will behaviors change after the smartwatch becomes ubiquitous? With the recent release of the Apple Watch, I speculate that we are in a paradigm shift. Along with some exciting benefits, the convenience of the Apple Watch will also create an environment where unhealthy distraction is the norm.

Here are five reasons why the Apple Watch will get in the way of interacting with the world around us:

1. A smartwatch offers even more convenient access to all the things we're curious about. If you're wondering what the total rushing yards were for the last Husky game, you simply need to hold up your wrist. All the while the fan cam has come and gone and you have no idea.
2. Not only is it more convenient but it's constantly in our peripheral vision, which will make notifications hard to ignore. Imagine sitting in a meeting or in a movie theater and seeing the person beside you checking his Apple Watch every few minutes when a notification comes in.
3. We've all seen campaigns against texting and driving due to the increase in texting-related car accidents. I can only imagine that the Apple watch will increase the number of distracted drivers as it is more convenient, constantly visible, and requires two hands to operate. The UK has already declared that using an Apple Watch while driving will result in the same penalty as using a smartphone while driving. It's easy enough to put your phone to the side while you drive, but I doubt as many people will think to take off their watch when they're running late to work.
4. With such a small screen, voice commands are a must. That means we're going to see and hear more people talking to their wrists and their wrists talking back. This type of interaction engages the people around you whether you intend to or not. Suddenly sending a text on the bus draws an audience who may not be interested in what restaurant you're meeting a friend for lunch.
5. If you're not interested in others listening to you dictate texts to friends, you have the option of sending a pre-set text or an emoji - both are essentially shortcuts for having a more in depth conversation. I foresee communication becoming shorter in length and containing less content in order to avoid the effort required to communicate via such a small screen. Conversations will lose their richness.

I have no doubt that the much anticipated Apple Watch will be a big seller and its convenience will allow users to complete essential tasks much more easily. However, the social and behavioral impact is something I'm not sure potential buyers have considered. Do you really need to be connected to the digital world every moment? Do you want to be that person looking at your phone or watch on the big screen at sporting events? I want to hear from you. As the conversation about the Apple Watch continues and we learn more about its capabilities, I'd like to hear your thoughts on how it could impact user behavior. Please feel free to reach me on Twitter [@TheNextUX](#).

*Claire is part of the interaction design team at Blink. She loves being one of the first people in the office each morning except Friday, when you will find her at Mighty O Donuts.*