Wearable devices

Devices consisting of an ensemble of electronics, sensors and software which are designed to be worn on the body and have data collection (and transmission) capabilities

Trends shaping the landscape

- There has been an increased market interest and activity in wearable technologies since 2010.
- There is a large variety of wearable devices, ranging from head-mounted displays to wearable video cameras, smart watches, wrist PCs, smart patches, smart clothing, data gloves and smart textiles.

Drivers

- Improvements in underpinning technologies
- Interoperability and convergence of data sources
- Emergence of bespoke wearable devices for the workplace

Barriers

- Trust and privacy concerns
- Uncertainty regarding financial costs
- Technical challenges of device and data

Sectors impacted

- Health and healthcare
- Civil service
- Transport
- Sports
- Retail

Socio-economic implications

- Wearable devices gathering data on employees could transform HR decision-making processes and make them more data-driven.
- The collected data could be leveraged to generate time, cost and manpower savings.
- Hands-free wearable devices could help improve process efficiency and productivity.
- Increased use of wearables in the workplace could result in more scrutiny of employee performance and behaviour. This could generate unease among employees and present legal and ethical challenges.
- Wearable devices could support the development of more effective training processes.
- New roles and skills requirements may emerge as wearable devices proliferate.
- The use of wearable devices in the workplace could result in improved inter-employee communications

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