Facebook is secretly building a smartwatch and planning to sell it next year

Facebook is building a smartwatch as part of its ongoing hardware efforts, according to a new report from *The Information*. The device is said to be an Android-based smartwatch, though the report does not say whether Facebook intends for the device to run Google's Wear OS. It also says Facebook is working on building its own operating system for hardware devices and that future iterations of the wearable may run that software instead.

The smartwatch would have messaging, health, and fitness features, the report says, and would join Facebook's Oculus virtual reality headsets and Portal video chat devices as part of the social network's growing hardware ecosystem. Facebook is also working on branded Ray-Ban smart glasses to come out later this year and a separate augmented reality research initiative known as Project Aria, which is part of the company's broader AR explorations it's been working on for some time now. Facebook declined to comment regarding any planned smartwatch projects

The social networking giant's hardware ambitions are no secret. The company has more than 6,000 employees working on various augmented and virtual reality projects and as part of existing hardware divisions like Oculus and Portal, as well as experimental initiatives under its Facebook Reality Labs division, *Bloomberg* reported last month. And although Facebook has not expressed a strong interest in health and fitness devices in the past, the company does have a track record in

wearables with its Oculus headsets and forthcoming smart glasses.

Facebook also acquired the neural interface startup CTRL-Labs in 2019. CTRL-Labs specialized in building wireless input mechanisms, including devices that could transmit electrical signals from the brain to computing devices without the need for traditional touchscreen or physical button inputs. The startup's intellectual property and ongoing research may factor into whatever wearables Facebook builds in the future — including a smartwatch, smart glasses, or future Oculus headsets.

Update February 12th, 6:22PM ET: *Noted that Facebook declined to comment.*

Update February 12th, 7:17PM ET: *Clarified that Facebook's Ray-Ban smart glasses partnership is distinct from Project Aria, an AR research initiative Facebook has no plans to commercialize.*

https://www.theverge.com/2021/2/12/22280798/facebook-smartwatch-messaging-health-fitness-release-date