Google is reportedly trying to buy Fitbit

Google parent company Alphabet is in talks to buy wearable company Fitbit, *Reuters* reports. There is currently no confirmation that the deal will definitely take place, according to sources familiar with the talks, nor is it known how much Alphabet has offered to acquire the US-based company. The news follows a report last month from *CNBC* that Fitbit was in the process of exploring a sale.

Google has played a part in the wearable market for years with its Wear OS operating system, but these have struggled to compete with the Apple Watch, despite getting support from a wide range of companies including LG, Fossil, and TicWatch. Even Samsung, a major Android manufacturer, has avoided Wear OS in favor of its own Tizen operating system.

In January, Google paid $40 million to acquire some kind of smartwatch technology from Fossil, but it's unclear what that technology was. A Fossil executive characterized it as a "new product innovation that's not yet hit the market," and so far as we know it still hasn't.

There have been persistent rumors that Google wants to make its own smartwatches

There have been persistent rumors over the years that Google has been interested in releasing a Google-branded Pixel smartwatch. At one point in 2016 these plans almost resulted in a Google smartwatch getting a release, but the company reportedly axed these plans over concerns that the watches could "…bring down the name of the Google hardware brand." These LG-manufactured smartwatches later released as the LG Watch Sport and LG Watch Style in 2017 to middling reviews.

Since then, Google’s first-party hardware ambitions have grown substantially. It acquired a portion of HTC’s smartphone engineering team back in 2017 to work on its Pixel phones, and a Fitbit acquisition could allow it to make a similar first-party push in the wearables space.

Apple’s experience with the Apple Watch, meanwhile, suggests that health is fast becoming a killer-app for smartwatches, and it’s an area that Fitbit has been increasingly focused on for its own fitness trackers. However, Fitbit’s track record with smart watches is more patchy, despite acquiring smartwatch manufacturer Pebble in 2016. The Fitbit Versa 2, for example, was a great fitness tracker but an average smart watch when it released earlier this year.

Google and Fitbit declined to comment to *Reuters* on the report.

https://www.theverge.com/2019/10/28/20936415/google-fitbit-acquisition-alphabet