

WHEN WEARABLE TECH BECOMES “CLOTHING”

1 COMMENT

Listening to “[The Shoe Must Go On](#)” episode (#039) of the *Fashion Is Your Business* podcast, it was satisfying to hear Dawn Dickson, of [Flat Out Of Heels](#), express her frustration explaining to venture capitalists about why her business is important. Essentially, she believes that many investors are looking for “billion dollar apps” instead of investing in businesses that are solving problems that a lot of people have.

She joins a number of people unimpressed with fashion tech and wearables being limited to apps and gadgets and gizmos straight out of *Jetsons*. I think of Johanna King-Slutsky’s article, “[Wonder and Control](#)” piece over at *The Awl* which calls out the Apple Watch as being expensive gizmo or toy. I also think of Liza Kindred of [Third Wave Fashion](#) who got me along a similar line of thinking with multiple podcasts and videos about the topic. As a society, we draw parallels between wearables and things we see in sci-fi movies, TV and comic books. This leads to products being made that are clunky and arguably unfashionable.

Incredible fashion tech exists right now, but not in ways that mass audiences are aware of. This arm of wearables are not immediately visible and, more importantly, are very useful.

Take for example, Dropel Fabrics (Sim Gulati, CEO and co-founder, was featured on the “[Gamechangers](#)” episode of the *FIYB* podcast #034) which sells hydrophobic cotton shirts and jackets through [Kelby & Co](#). What do I mean by hydrophobic? I mean water slides off clothes.

Through nanotechnology, co-founders Sim and Brad have solved a very common problem: dealing with stains. The only things they need to do next is make pants with the same fabric and to consider branching out into womenswear, childrens-wear, licensing the technology, etc. What they don’t need to do is make the dress that Sean Kelly made on the “[Rainway](#)” episode of *Project Runway* (as cool as a presentation as it was.)

Another great example is [emPOWERED](#) handbags. Essentially, you can plug in a device into a port within the bag and charge it while you’re on the go. (CEO and creator Loni Edwards was the inaugural guest of Open Source Fashion’s “[Fashion Tech Founders Caffeine Convo](#)” interview and networking event.) The bags look no different than other bags— which is intentional, no one wants a huge ugly thing to carry around.

There is a future of fashion technology being designed with the everyday person in mind. People who don’t want to sacrifice being fashionable for new technology and want things that they can actually use. This future of fashion tech and wearables may not look ‘cool’. In fact, you might not really notice it at all. I look forward to when we will be referring to these wearable tech items as ‘clothing’ or ‘accessories.’