



Pedro Diezma

CEO at Zerintia Technologies

Nigel Wright caught up with Pedro Diezma: author, explorer, motivational coach and technology innovator, to talk about the role his firm Zerintia is playing in the development of cutting edge Wearable Technology. He also chats about his passion for personal development and his adventures in Mongolia searching for Genghis Khan's tomb.

For the interested layman, could you briefly explain what 'Wearable Technology' is?

Wearable Technology is the term used to describe the various accessories and garments you can buy that, when you wear them, capture your biometric data or enhance your ability to perform a particular task. Wearable Technology has actually been around for many years – take the calculator watch, for example, launched in 1980 – but the latest Wearable Technology craze began around three years ago when Google developed its first Google Glass prototype. Today there are a growing number of exciting products in the market and the pervasiveness of this technology, I believe, shows that people are embracing a future where technology has effectively become an integral part of their natural environment.

What role does Zerintia Technologies play in this burgeoning market?

Zerintia is a recognised global expert in Wearable Technology and the Internet of Things (IoT). Launched ten years ago, our firm has built its reputation through the development of bespoke Wearable Technology solutions, including devices and software add-ons, for companies operating in the healthcare, industrial, retail and logistics sectors. We also offer additional consultancy services to firms seeking to leverage the broad range of Wearable Technology solutions available

today. At the heart of our business is innovation - we are passionate about technology and enjoy experimenting with and improving our solutions every day. Regardless of the type of solution we bring to market, our aim is always twofold; improve the life of individuals and help organisations become more efficient through the optimisation of business models and processes.



Pedro Diezma, CEO at Zerintia Technologies





Which Zerintia solution are you most proud of to date?

Over the years we have amassed an enviable amount of internal knowledge and expertise, which puts us in a privileged position to be able to anticipate and then capitalise on the latest market trends and develop disruptive technologies. One solution I am particularly proud of is our Google Glass platform, developed in collaboration with Emertech, which enabled Red Cross workers wearing Google Glass devices and with the assistance of drones, to see real-time information on medical emergencies in the field, such as those caused by natural disasters.

What ambitious plans do you have for the business over the next 12 months?

Currently, we are excited about the imminent launch of Real Time Healthcare, the first ever Wearable Technology software for use in the treatment of chronic patients and the elderly. Developed in collaboration with Oracle, this software was conceived in response to the increasing strain on healthcare systems in the developed world, in large part due to the ageing population, and the need for better and faster treatment for patients. In addition to this, we're hoping to launch a new smart watch which will integrate with this software, enabling hospitals and insurance companies to more effectively monitor patients, in line with the medications and behavioural guidelines prescribed by their doctors. Furthermore, we are also working on new technology for the aeronautic and industrial sector – again utilising smart glasses and drones – that we hope will transform certain business processes in those sectors.

Google stopped producing its Google Glass prototype in 2015. Was the project a failure? Does Google Glass still have a future?

When the Explorer testing program finished, Google announced it would stop producing the Google Glass prototype and begin a new design phase focused on perfecting the product now that it better understood the user experience. The media distorted this announcement, however, by claiming that the prototype had been a failure. Google perhaps didn't help matters by creating a lot of hype around Google Glass. For around two years there seemed to be daily

updates from Google lauding the disruptive 'world changing' potential of Google Glass, so when the product was finally removed from the shelves, inevitably people perceived this as the product failing to live up to its inflated potential. It definitely has a future though; images of the new model, the Google Glass Enterprise Edition, are already circulating online. This new model has an upgraded prism, enabling users to see information more clearly, an improved processor (Intel) and a longer-lasting battery. This product will initially only be available for use in the business and medical worlds.

In terms of sector, where are the best opportunities for Wearable Tech companies?

Wearable Technology has applications for companies operating in B2C and B2B markets. B2C, and particularly the fitness industry, has seen the biggest growth so far and there is even a degree of saturation in that market now, which is making it difficult for Wearable Tech companies to exploit opportunities. In B2B, the industrial and manufacturing sectors represent big opportunities for Wearable Tech firms, especially in 'high risk' environments like mining and oil and gas, where wearables can play a key role in ensuring the safety of employees performing complex tasks like assembling equipment. The same applies to the medical field, where wearables have been used by surgeons performing operations. Zerintia is very much focused on serving the corporate and healthcare sectors, where there are still a great deal of unexplored opportunities. In the USA, around 1% of firms are currently using wearables but we expect that number to have increased to 10% within the next five years.

A 2015 survey by Vanson Bourne found that almost 50% of British consumers believe Wearable Tech is 'just a fad.' Is this something to worry about?

I don't think it's something to worry about. The products available now simply represent the beginning, or the first layer if you like, of a period of human evolution that will see us become ever more integrated with technology. At the end of the day, the aim of all Wearable Technology is to enhance human beings and big companies like Intel, Samsung and Google understand this and are already investing billions of dollars into developing the next generation of Wearable Tech devices. Over time, Wearable Technology will become diminutive - almost invisible to the human eye - and even better integrated with our body. There are already 'smart drugs' that can enhance your ability to concentrate and 'electronic skin grafts', where people can have sensors inserted under their skin which perform tasks such as monitoring heart and brain activity. Remember, many people still thought the internet was 'just a fad' in the early 1990s!

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There is a lot of scaremongering associated with the ever increasingly intrinsic relationship we have with technology. Science fiction, for example, has a tendency to depict dystopian rather than utopian futures. Do you believe we should be worried?

There's no doubt that movies and the media in general can have a huge impact on people's perceptions and behaviours. A classic example is the movie Jaws - people were afraid to swim in the sea after seeing it! I do think it's vitally important to be wary of the fact that technology can be used for unethical purposes. This is certainly what the potential futures depicted in movies like Minority Report, Blade Runner and I, Robot did – they acted as a warning and helped us to reflect on the potential dangers associated with the mis-use of technology. There is a flip-side though, because movies can also trigger our imagination and help us visualise exciting futures with flying cars, interstellar travel and longer life-spans, giving us hope for a

better future ahead. Some of the Wearable technologies depicted in the movie Back to the Future, such as hover boards and self-adjusting clothing are now a reality.

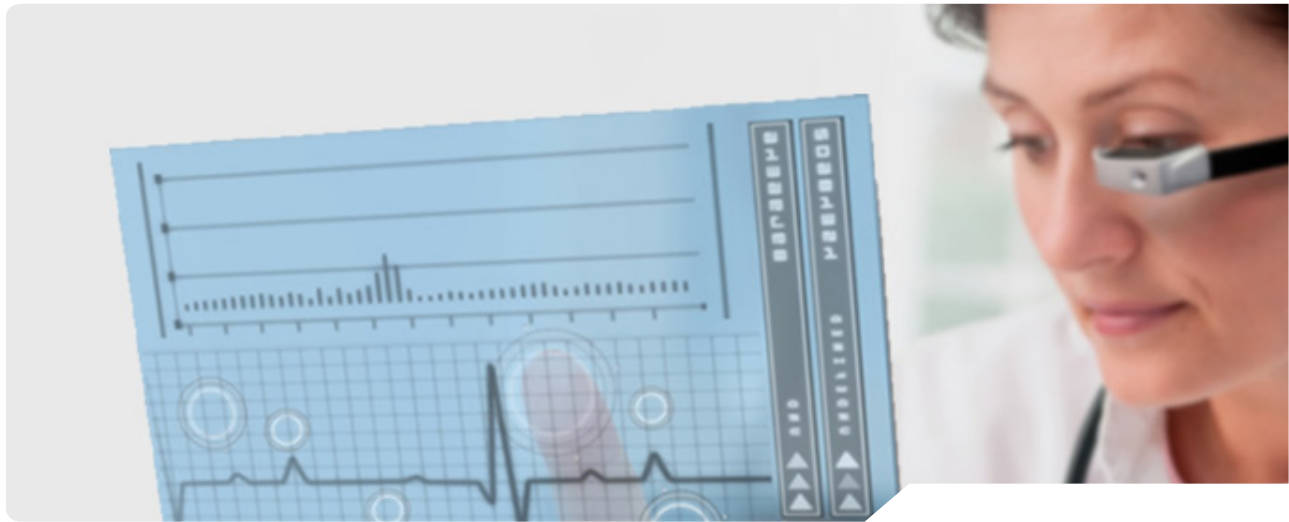
What, in your view, needs to be done to better communicate the potential benefits of Wearable Tech products and the uses of technology in general?

I think there needs to be a shift away from the media obsession with the launch of new consumer-end devices, particularly within the fitness industry. Those products have generally been well-received in the market and I think there is enough information out there now for people to make an informed opinion about them. What I would like to see instead is more time dedicated to communicating the benefits of the incredible devices being developed for the medical industry. This is technology that can truly transform people's lives. For example, sensors that allow us to better monitor vital signs and data from our bodies which in turn can detect the early signs of disease, automatically alert emergency services in the case of an accident and even anticipate epileptic seizures. The other perhaps underreported area is the progress which is being made in nanotechnology and particularly the use of graphene, a revolutionary material which is leading to some incredible inventions. Those are things that I believe more people should know about.

How much of the R&D and innovation that takes place in Wearable Technology is essentially driven by the military, before eventually filtering down into uses for the consumer?

Certainly some of the advances in Wearable Technology have been driven by military innovation and today around 5-10% of overall research and development in the field is attributed to the military.





The military does follow its own rules though, so it doesn't develop technology with the view to eventually making it publically available. Although there are some instances where it has adapted commercial products, most notably smart glasses, for use in battle scenarios, in the main it focuses on its own projects such as 'Future Soldier' and has developed technology such as the Powered Exoskeleton - wearable body armour which enables soldiers to move faster and lift more weight, as well as monitor their vital signs and movements.

Aside from Wearable Technology, what other technology products or trends do you monitor with interest? What is your favourite piece of technology that you own?

The next technological revolution will be defined by three distinct technologies; wearables is one, and the others are virtual reality and 3D printing. Zerintia is monitoring each of these areas closely, and has already worked on several 3D printing prototypes. The Apple Watch is currently my favourite device, mainly because I can use it to track my sporting activities, although there are many other smart watches in the market which offer the same level of quality as Apple. Another device I use is GoPro, which again I use to record my day-to-day activities as well as adventures overseas.

You're a member of The Explorers Club? What is that? What discoveries led to you being accepted a member?

The Explorers Club of New York is an international society dedicated to the advancement of field based research. Since its inception in 1904, it has served as a meeting point for explorers and as a body that actively encourages public interest in exploration. The club has a number of famous alumni such as Neil Armstrong, Roald Amundsen and Matthew Alexander Henson. I was admitted as a member in 2013, following field research I carried out in Avraga in Mongolia, searching for the location of the missing tomb of Genghis Khan.

What inspired you to write 'El renacer del héroe'? Are you planning to publish anything else in the future?

As well as following my passion for technology and its role in improving lives, I have done a lot of research into personal and professional development techniques and use this knowledge to

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provide motivational coaching to individuals and teams. Based on my experiences, and inspired by books written by other business gurus, I set out to embody my vision and ideas into a book of best practices for personal success. In 2013 I actually published a sequel to El renacer del héroe, which focused more on the world of business and specifically, start-ups. I am currently writing my first historical novel, inspired by my travels in Mongolia, Peloponeso in Greece and Languedoc in France.

What are you currently reading?

I usually like to read two books simultaneously; one philosophical or spiritual in nature and the other being a technical or scientific based book. Currently, I'm reading Don Miguel Ruiz's The Four Agreements about the concept of personal freedom inspired by the wisdom of the ancient Toltec empire in Mexico. The other is Stephen Hawking's The Grand Design.

Which individuals or business do you look to for inspiration?

The film director James Cameron is one. I admire his dual approach to storytelling, delving into the past to bring forward a vision of transcendent events in history, but at the same time always having the ability to reveal a prescient vision of the future. He's also a renowned marine explorer. The other person I look up to is Richard Branson. I had an opportunity to see and hear him speak at a conference in London once and his message is clear: live life with intensity and passion.