Can you really stop the ageing process? Humanity a new app, thinks so!

Maddyness spoke to Peter Ward, Co-founder of Humanity, an app that is launching in 2021 and aims to tackle ageing and how to stop or rather delay the process. Both Peter Ward and Michael Geer founded Humanity and came together through a common desire to help individuals be more healthy. Why, you may ask?

Because being healthy is very important in prolonging life and as COVID-19 has shown those with preexisting conditions were at greater risk. Although Humanity sits firmly in the wellness space, it has been spurred on to help healthy people keep healthy. If more people can monitor their health they will be less likely to fall foul of disease. Of course there can be no guarantee, but health and wellbeing is an ever growing market and one that Humanity is keen to capitalise on.

[Maddyness] Peter, tell us a little about Humanity?

[Peter] Humanity's mission is to maximise the healthspan of everyone on

earth. We are a consumer subscription service that will enable users to discover what actions they can take to slow down their ageing process and stay healthy for longer. In tracking key ageing biomarkers (digital and blood work) alongside the actions users take daily, the service will use machine learning tools to highlight what's working for people similar to them to slow their ageing process. It's a bit like a "Waze" (the traffic app) for maximizing healthspan.

Fill Maddyness on the journey and the story of Humanity so far.

I want to begin by addressing my co-founder Michael's journey which began when he lost loved ones to Cancer. It spurred him on to spend time in the labs of various scientists in Silicon Valley. Whether he spoke to stem cell researchers or immunologists, he was told that although they had their grant for Cardiovascular Disease or Cancer, they were not working on that end-point, instead they were looking upstream of that. Stem Cell researchers, for example, were looking at the loss of function in the stem cell cycles that led to an increased susceptibility in that tissue to all the downstream chronic disease states to creep in. It became apparent to him that slowing down, or reversing this loss of core function in the body (in other words, "ageing") could prevent or stave off all chronic diseases.

It was at that point that I joined Michael to explore how we could use our joint skill-sets in consumer tech to make a huge impact in this area. The idea of helping people prevent, or at least stave off, chronic disease immediately resonated with me as I had lost my father aged 67 from the effects of a stroke at 62 which rendered him disabled. Something that was heartbreaking to watch.

Michael and myself began attending what we termed "science fantasy camps" where scientists would do things like sequencing their whole genome. We wanted to validate our thinking on what Humanity could become. The insights we learned helped form the value proposition for Humanity. Now, we're extremely excited to bring this 'superpower' directly to millions of users.

Can you explain what Humanity will do as an app?

A user downloads the app and the first thing they can do is find out their current Rate of Aging (RoA).(*yes we are using the American spelling!) This will be a prediction based on their activity levels pulled from Apple Health, and a

collection of lifestyle and health-related questions based on a scientifically validated study of the real health outcomes of over 250,000 people. individuals will then be given a daily (Humanity) score that will correlate with what's working for others to slow their aging. Their RoA will update periodically based on changes in their digital, blood and epigenetic markers.

Most importantly, they will be given the opportunity to take actions daily to measure the effect on their RoA, including highlighting actions others have taken who are similar to them.

Can you explain how the value of the data from all the users will enable each user to grow in their understanding of their own health and wellbeing?

Humanity is based upon scientifically validated biological aging models that have been developed with longitudinal data sets, which monitored what happened to people over many years i.e. who go sick (all cause morbidity) and who died (all cause mortality). From these models, which have largely been developed based on blood and DNA methylation markers, we are able to establish an accurate RoA measure for our users, and how it changes over time based on the actions they take and what's working for people like them.

By tracking a user's digital biomarkers, we are able to establish a clear understanding of what actions they are taking on any given day, and extrapolate these against their RoA measure to see what's working to slow their RoA.

Why is the wellness industry the next big thing in tech? You have some impressive investors, can you talk through why everyone is/has been so excited by this concept?

The market for digital health (which includes HealthTech, Wearables, Telemedicine and mobile Health) is exploding, growing 27.6% CAGR from $86.4B to $504B in 2025, with AI Health growing 50.13% CAGR from $2.1B to

$36.1B in 2025. There is also an explosion in Digital Health Monitoring, with 39% CAGR from $254B to $353B in 2025.

Digital Health is bucking the rest of the market: H1 (the first six months of 2020) saw a record breaking $5.4B invested into the sector, according to Rock Health, as the pandemic reminds everyone of the importance and opportunity in this area. That's $1.2B more than the same period in 2019, which was then a record.

We feel very fortunate to have attracted the support of some of the leading investors, founders and funds in consumer and digital health. This is in large part due to their belief in our ability to bring this breakthrough paradigm of how to monitor and improve the health of millions around the world. Our past successes in reaching over one billion consumers via consumer tech platforms helps in convincing them that while our mission is bold, we have the potential to achieve it.

Currently, many people feel helpless when it comes to aging. As the biggest driver to increasing your risk of disease, if we can empower people to take control of their health by slowing their aging, reducing their risk of disease – whether non-communicable or even infectious, such as the likes of COVID-19 (which has been shown to be highly correlated with age and pre-existing conditions), then we have an opportunity to make a positive impact on all humanity. Preventative health couldn't be more of a higher priority than it is now.

How long till we can all have access to this?

We plan to launch on the App Store initially in the UK in early 2021, followed by the US soon after. Prices start at £25 per month for the basic package and £75 for the premium.

Finally what is a quote you like to live by?

"The reasonable man adapts himself to the world around him. The unreasonable man adapts the

world around him to himself. All progress relies on the unreasonable man." -George Bernhard Shaw

One of our Values: "Unreasonable Believers". Like with the Wright brothers, who invented air travel, we now take it for granted that we travel via 'air ports' around the world. People thought they were crazy at the time though. Similarly, when we say people can slow their aging, they often think we are crazy. What's actually crazy is that the data shows people can slow or even reverse the aging damage in their bodies, but most people do not know that this is possible. Yet, no one is using data to help you understand what actions are working to slow your aging. That is what Humanity is and will be focused on delivering.

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