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and 6 plus, Apple Watch and its Apple Pay solution.

Astonishing? Astounding? Maybe. But for the analysts, whose opinions varied widely, Apple once again moved the needle forward in several device categories, most notably its Apple Watch.

“The Apple Watch shows it could be a leader in changing that category,” Boorstin said.

Apple Watch is the company’s “next chapter” and will include Apple Watch Sports and Apple Watch Edition versions, with a side dial as its key innovation. It starts at \$349 and requires an iPhone.

Once beyond the fanfare, the panel got down to some pressing questions.

“The question is, will it enhance the phone experience and will consumers buy it. But Apple does user interfaces better than anyone else so the watch works well,” commented Shelly Palmer, managing director of the digital media group at Landmark Ventures.

A “linear activator” housed inside the watch essentially makes the Apple Watch a miniature computer system on one chip. But will people actually embrace a virtual wearable computer?

“The Apple Watch should look primitive in three or four years. Is there a place for wearables? I think so. And this may be it,” Palmer said.

“Apple is trying to demonstrate that Apple Watch can do lots of things and open up some enhancement categories,” added Glenn Tinley, president and Founder of Mexia Interactive.

Two additional categories that could use some enhancing are payments and healthcare, according to Chetan Sharma, president of Chetan Sharma Consulting. And the Apple 6



CNBC's Julia Boorstin led an analyst discussion on the new iPhone and Apple Watch.

could be the answer.

“The industry has been struggling with payments and the iPhone 6 should help. It could eventually be a leader in payment processing.”

Apple Pay, the company’s entry into the payment processing sector, will allow one time payments and no static numbers stored on the device. Its initial customers are impressive; American Express, MasterCard and Visa, along with several high profile merchants such as McDonalds, Subway and others.

“It’s exactly what Apple needed to do. If they do it for healthcare too, that would change two industries,” Palmer said.

But what about security? Added Palmer:

“Security is always an issue, and an arms race. But can you trust your IT department to do a better job than Apple? It’s a big issue.”

Battery life is an ongoing challenge as well, and one that didn’t escape the panel’s attention. “I’m not blown away by the battery life of iPhone 6, which says 12 hours, but I don’t think so,” he added.

The iPhone 6, Apple announced, will be available in 115 countries by year’s end and all customers will be able to download free by Sept. 17.

“Apple has been a fashion factory for years and it has created an affluent marketplace. Did they get it right with iPhone 6? The customers, as usual, will decide with their wallets,” Palmer concluded. ●

## GWS Provides More Insight on Network Performance at SMW

As the CTIA masses arrived, Global Wireless Solutions (GWS) continued its testing of the network performance of the four national wireless carriers throughout the Sands Expo and Convention Center. Tuesday’s tests provided insight into the stability of each network as they became more loaded with traffic on the first day of CTIA 2014. GWS performed indoor testing using Rohde & Schwarz’s SwissQual QualiPoc platform. GWS also performed data testing using the GWS Mobile Diagnostic App loaded onto Samsung Galaxy S4 devices.

Testing showed that AT&T was the only network to successfully complete all voice calls. T-Mobile failed two calls, both located in the back of the hall near the Freeman Service Center. Verizon experienced 4 blocks, with the weakest location around the right-most concession stand in the hall. Sprint experienced 7 failures, mostly near the Venetian Ballroom and the same right-most concession stand.

With the onslaught of traffic arriving on Tuesday, T-Mobile and AT&T provided the fastest LTE download throughputs at about 10

Mbps. This was only half the performance that T-Mobile provided on the previous day. However, AT&T took the load in stride by actually increasing performance by 50 percent from Monday. Verizon’s LTE network slowed significantly, with download throughputs reduced by more than half from yesterday’s level, delivering about 6 Mbps. Sprint’s EVDO was still the slowest, with throughputs at about 600 kbps. GWS performed follow-up testing Monday night, verifying that Sprint’s LTE network covers the front of the Palazzo/Venetian (on the strip), but is non-existent on the backside of the building around the Sands Convention Center.

On the Samsung Galaxy devices loaded with the GWS Mobile Diagnostic App, all devices had WiFi capability turned on. AT&T was the only provider to offload capacity to WiFi, which unsurprisingly enabled them to improve LTE performance on their loaded network. However, AT&T’s WiFi delivered about 4 Mbps. For Sprint, T-Mobile, and Verizon, the throughputs matched those of the QualiPoc testing. ●