A survey conducted by Research Now asked 109 Apple Watch users how they use their devices from May 19 to 28 — roughly a month after the watch first became available. It found that 72 percent have used the watch for fitness tracking and email.
Apple Watch owners use their devices most frequently for the same old things their
smartphones and Fitbits can do: fitness tracking and e-mail, according to a survey
commissioned by Battery Ventures.

That’s despite the fact that, shortly after the Watch was released, more
than 3,500 apps were already available. From real estate to games and online
shopping, developers came up with thousands of new uses for the tiny
screen — and yet so far, few people are taking those cues.

But are early adopters a good indicator for how more people will use the
Watch?

“Not always,” said Jonathan Sills, executive in residence at Battery Ventures, who
commissioned the study. “I think that the jury remains out as Apple iterates on the Watch
and also as developers learn more about the way Watches are being used.”

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their devices from May 19 to 28 — roughly a month after the device became available. It
found that 72 percent have used the Watch for fitness tracking and e-mail. Also common?
Checking the weather (71 percent), using Siri (63 percent), texting (62 percent), making or
taking calls (61 percent) and navigation (60 percent). Ironically, only 44 percent said
they’d used the Watch for timekeeping.

Survey respondents were from across the U.S. and had various Apple Watch models, from
the entry-level Sport to the pricey Edition. More often than not, they were men, ages 25 to
44, who lived in suburban areas. Most had been using the device for more than two
weeks. Despite its small sample size, the survey offers insight into which features early
Apple Watch wearers most commonly use, Sill wrote in a blog post.

The survey’s other findings showed that Apple Watch wearers increased their use of Apple Pay and checked social media more often. Most said their engagement with promotional e-mails didn’t change, but Sills said that if promoters get the equation right — offering a discount, say, when a customer enters a store — that could change.

A lot could change, said Rob Enderle, principal analyst at the Enderle Group, because the Apple Watch is still evolving.

“What a market eventually does with something may not be what the early adopters first do with it,” he said. “Sometimes it takes a while, with a new device, for the market to wrap its head around the device’s potential.”

Early in the life of smartphones, for example, manufacturers felt that business — with its requisite e-mails, scheduling and messaging — would be the future of that technology.

“Palm killed their iPhone-like product because the CEO was convinced that nobody wanted a phone that played games,” Enderle said. Today’s smartphones, which mix business and fun, have proved that theory wrong.

It remains to be seen, too, whether smartwatches will catch on in the mass market at all. As of early last week, 2.79 million Apple Watches had been sold in the U.S., according to Slice Intelligence, a Palo Alto research firm. That’s a small fraction of the country’s population.

Whether a technology is easy to adopt, fits a need and provides advantages are among the things that influence whether or not a person makes use of a new product, according to the diffusion of innovations theory, published in 1962 by communications scholar Everett Rogers.

According to Rogers’ theory, less than 3 percent of people are innovators when it comes to adopting new technology — excited enough about an idea to jump on board first. About 14 percent are early adopters, the next to wade into the new technology. The remaining
majority is slower to come around.

Enderle said Apple’s early adopters, in particular, tend to buy products for status.

“The majority of them are buying them so they have something somebody else doesn’t have,” he said.

Greta Kaul is a San Francisco Chronicle staff writer. E-mail: gkaul@sfchronicle.com. Twitter: @gretakaual