See your photos in 3D on new website

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Dr David McKinnon

(PhysOrg.com) -- You could turn your holiday snaps or favourite figurines into three-dimensional images with new free software developed by a researcher from Queensland University of Technology and the Australasian CRC for Interaction Design (ACID), based at QUT.

Eight years of 3D image research is coming to fruition for Dr David McKinnon who has designed software that could revolutionise the way three-dimensional images are created.

And the best part is anyone can log onto Dr McKinnon's website and use the software prototype, called 3Dsee, for free.

"In the film and computer games industry, you would spend a really long time making 3D models to create footage like what 3Dsee could create in just a few minutes," Dr McKinnon said.

"Instead of 3D animators working from a set of photos to model an object or using a cumbersome laser scanner, this software can create 3D models directly from a series of photos, which is a great time and money saver.

"The full version of this software could create 3D action shots, like the famous Matrix bullet scene."

Dr McKinnon said the software automatically locates and tracks common points between the images allowing a determination of where the cameras were when the photos were taken. This information is then used to create a 3D model from the images using graphics cards to massively accelerate the computations.

"The full version of this software would be great for realistic learning simulators and training software, where you want everything to look like the real thing," he said.

"This technology could also be great for museums wishing to turn their display objects into 3D images that can be viewed online.

"We are even looking into making 3D models of cows to save farmers spending thousands of dollars transporting their cattle vast distances to auction sites, allowing for an eBay style auction website for cattle.

"Films, animations and computer games could also benefit, since 3D film making is taking over from the traditional 2D method of filmmaking.

"Another application is allowing people to create 3D models of their own face to use on their avatar in computer games or 3D social networking sites such as Second Life or Sony's Home."

The free prototype software can be found on the 3Dsee.net website.

To create a 3D image, the software requires between five and 15 consecutive, overlapping photos of an object. The photos must overlap each other by a minimum of 80 to 90 per cent.

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Provided by Queensland University of Technology, Dr David McKinnon

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