

Kinect for Xbox - the story behind the science

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Have you ever wondered about the story behind one of the most exciting computer gaming inventions of late? If so you're in luck, because Jamie Shotton, one of the developers of Kinect for Xbox, will be telling the story behind it at Cambridge Science Festival later this month.

Shotton, who studied at Queens' College Cambridge, now works for Microsoft which manufactures the [Kinect](#) and [Xbox](#) consoles.

Kinect works on the principle of something called machine learning, a modern branch of artificial intelligence. What is clever about the science behind it is that it enables the programme to work well for everyone, regardless of their shape or size. It is one of the fastest selling consumer electronics devices in history, having sold over eight million units in its first two months on the market.

It makes you the controller, as you play games with your whole body and the programme responds to your body movements direct the game.

Explaining more about how he came to invent the Kinect programme, Jamie Shotton said: "My time at Queens' included a PhD in computer vision at the Engineering Department where I focussed on automatic visual object recognition. In particular I wanted to know how we could teach computers by example to recognise different categories of object - cars, sheep, trees etc, in photographs. I turned to machine learning, a modern branch of artificial intelligence, and came up with an approach that worked."

Jamie Shotton and Chris Bishop from Microsoft Research will speak more about the story behind Kinect in the Lady Mitchell Hall at 10.30am and 12noon on Saturday 19th March. There will also be an interactive camera demonstration of the latest technology gadgets. Pre booking is advised.

Cambridge Science Festival, which takes place at venues across the University begins on Monday, March 14 and runs until March 27.

The festival attracted over 35,000 visitors in 2010 and the number is expected to be matched this year. The festival opens the doors of Cambridge University's laboratories to the public with more than 150 mostly free talks, events and workshops about science -with the aim of bringing science to life.

Provided by University of Cambridge

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