

University of Southern California researcher spoofs Googles prank (w/ video)

April 5 2011, by Katie Gatto



(PhysOrg.com) -- You may remember that just a few days ago, the folks over at Google decided to play a little prank on the world. For April Fools Day they created a spoof video about a supposed new feature, Gmail Motion. If you didn't get to see the prank first hand, you can take a look at [Physorg's coverage of the joke](#).

No one denies that the joke was funny, but I bet that you did not know that it is actually possible too. The [technology](#) to control a computer with your [gestures](#) was out long before this prank was posted on by [Google](#).

The real technology was created by a researcher named Evan Suma, who is currently doing post-doctoral research at the University of Southern California. In December, he showed the world his teams software, named [Flexible Action and Articulated Skeleton Toolkit](#), or FFAST for short. The technology uses a sensor from a Microsoft Kinect to let the users body act as an input device, taking the place of the keyboard and mouse.

How good is this tool? Well you could ask any one of the 1.5 million people who have viewed the video of the system, while it was being used to play a game of [World of Warcraft](#), or better yet go and look at it for yourself, the video is still posted.

In response to Google prank Mr. Suma decided to put together a FFAST for Gmail. The system, which took about 30 minutes of reprogramming to make work with Gmail, was dubbed SLOOW, which is short for Software Library Optimizing Obligatory Waving.

More realistic applications for this technology would lie in the field of surgical medicine, where the tool could allow surgeons to look at multiple images of a patient without having to stop surgery and re-wash.

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Citation: University of Southern California researcher spoofs Googles prank (w/ video) (2011, April 5) retrieved 26 April 2024 from <https://phys.org/news/2011-04-university-southern-california-spoofs-googles.html>

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