

Toyota demos 'Window to the World' vehicle back seat smart window technology (w/ video)

July 21 2011, by Bob Yirka



(PhysOrg.com) -- Designers from the Copenhagen Institute of Interaction Design and engineers from Toyota have been working together and have come up with a unique and innovative concept they call the "Window to the Word" where the window of the back seat of an automobile is converted into a see-through touch-screen device capable of allowing people, likely children, to draw images with their finger, magnify objects they see outside the car, learn by having objects they touch converted into another language, get distance for objects seen and be given information about objects they see.

Watching the video the team has created of a child using the [new technology](#) is both awe inspiring and head scratching. On the one hand, you have to give the [designers](#) and engineers credit for even thinking of such a thing, and for portraying it in such a beautiful and simplistic way. But, on the other, the practicalities of such a technology soon surpass the feelings of wonder at this new demonstration of the power of applied technology. Would window smudging ruin the effect after awhile, for example, or would a child bother with it if buckled in so tight that turning to use the window would become a strenuous activity; or would kids prefer to just have a [tablet computer](#) on their lap, etc.

Using the new technology, which was demoed at the European [Automobile Manufacturers'](#) Association meeting last month, in Belgium, appears to be straightforward and simple. To zoom in on an object, two fingers are spread outwardly from a single point, as on a tablet device. To draw, a single finger is pressed against the window and moved about, again, similar to any other touch-screen. Menuing is controlled via a designated area in the lower left corner of the window. One truly interesting feature is that objects drawn on the window appear to move out of the framed window at the same rate as the car is moving, giving the illusion that the object drawn was actually part of the outside landscape and is being left behind as the car heads off.

Whether or not the “Window to the World” concept ever makes it to real world vehicles, the ideas behind it demonstrate that car manufacturers are intent on using every bit of available technology to make driving, or riding in cars in the future, a better experience for all of us.

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