

Nokia prototype: twist, bend, tap, steal show (w/ video)

October 28 2011, by Nancy Owano



(PhysOrg.com) -- The talk of the Nokia Show in London this week was a demo that had admiring visitors wishing the little device was beyond Cool-Idea Prototype and instead a launch with dates in place for stores and online shopping sites. The mind-bender, though not fully baked, is a hand-bender, namely a flexible kinetic device. The Nokia prototype allows the user to do tasks like pan through photos, zoom in and out, select and pause music, all by twisting, bending, bowing, and tapping the corners of the device. The prototype is, for now, simply named Nokia

kinetic device.

The prototype has an [OLED display](#). A user can get in and out by bending the handset back and forth. The user can manage menus by twisting and bending the [device](#) in different directions. In so many words, Nokia's think squad has imagined a mobile device that can behave according to how it is flexed.

The prototype demonstrated at Nokia World is from the Nokia Research Center (NRC). "The demo shows how intuitive and simple user interactions can be just by bending and twisting," says the Center's notes. The NRC also points out that Nokia is nowhere near the suggestion that the new screen invention is to replace the standard touchscreen. Instead, the concept is intended to suggest another option. As options go, the device is seen as useful for certain circumstances. Those include very cold climates where touchscreens may not be easily operated. The device can work even when a person is wearing gloves.

Yet another talking point in this week's reports on the prototype is that it is a potentially useful device for the blind. One can get the device to work without having to look at it. The bending properties don't need vision.



This is not the last innovation we are likely to see in mobile device designs. The prototype is the latest in a succession of concepts that seek to enhance the mobile experience. As computing gets more mobile it clearly gets more inventively tactile. Innovative ways of handling smartphones, tablets, and other devices always draw crowds. Some observers at the London show noted the past interest in the introduction of the Synapse concept phone with squeeze sensors. This was demonstrated as a phone that the user can control by squeezing the sides or running a finger across a touchpad on the backside. Fuse was announced as a collaboration between Synaptics, Texas Instruments, Alloy, Immersion, and The Astonishing Tribe.

The Nokia demo appears as something that could be applied to smartphones as well as tablets. The demo's screen size was a little less than five inches.

Asked when the device will be brought to market, the answer from the company representative was a vague, "Soon" but quickly followed by the comment, "It depends on how big the demand is in the market." Still, those who have seen the device at the [Nokia](#) event or watched the videos generally agree that the time spent was fun and worthwhile, as the concept is a reminder of all the future innovations in mobile technology still in the wings.

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