

To keep social drinkers safe, one tech company is bringing breathalyzers to the bar

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Ladybug Teknologies is piloting the SipSmart breathalyzer kiosk at bars in Western New York and Hamilton, Ontario. The company's U.S. headquarters are in the UB Technology Incubator.

(Medical Xpress) -- Buffalo Niagara and Canadian tech firm Ladybug Teknologies has launched a pilot program for the SipSmart Network, a breathalyzer kiosk that enables bar patrons to stay safe by checking their level of intoxication before they drive.

The network's main component is a thin, sleek kiosk that encapsulates a police-grade breathalyzer. The machine employs state-of-the-art platinum [fuel cell technology](#) to obtain accurate blood alcohol measurements, according to the company.

Through the SipSmart pilot, bar-goers in both the United States and Canada will have the opportunity to test the technology.

Ladybug, founded in Canada, expanded its operations into the U.S. market in 2010, opening an American headquarters at the University at Buffalo Technology Incubator. The incubator, run by UB's Office of Science, Technology Transfer and Economic Outreach (UB STOR), provides emerging businesses with the technical, business and financial assistance they need to become a force in Western New York's knowledge economy.

On Oct. 14, Ladybug hosted a Canadian launch party for the SipSmart Network at Koi in Hess Village in Hamilton, Ontario. An American kick-off took place Oct. 21 at Caputi's Sheridan Pub in Tonawanda, N.Y., just outside of Buffalo.

Kiosks will stay at Caputi's and Chainsaw Saloon in Waterloo, Ontario, through the holiday season. Balloons Restaurant and Nightclub in Ellicottville will host a third kiosk for at least a month.

For \$5, social drinkers can use the kiosk three times over the course of the night. To get a reading, patrons simply blow into the breathalyzer through a reusable mouthpiece that they can purchase for 50 cents from

a nearby dispenser that looks like a gumball machine.

The goal is to prevent drunk driving by giving revelers a simple, inexpensive way to access information that can help them stay safe, said Sherry Colbourne, Ladybug co-founder and CEO.

"Public opinion on the lack of individual accountability is at an all-time high and is echoed in a reduced tolerance for drunk driving," Colbourne said. "For too long, the technology that can separate social drinkers from their keys has been closely held by enforcement and our legal communities. Ladybug is making this technology available to the people who need it the most -- our social drinkers."

"The kiosk system opens state-of-the-art technology up to anyone, giving people of all income levels access to the most accurate breathalyzer technology," said Christine Montag, Ladybug co-founder and chief operating officer.

She notes that by taking multiple readings during a night out, kiosk users can not only find out their [blood alcohol](#) concentration, but gauge whether their bodies are in the process of absorbing or eliminating alcohol.

The SipSmart network will complement Ladybug's existing product lines, all of which use technology to promote social responsibility.

The company's other offerings include BAQ Tracker, a personal, handheld breathalyzer, and BAQ Tracker Mobile, a smart phone app that helps social drinkers keep track of their level of intoxication by logging, in real-time, each drink they consume.

As the SipSmart pilot progresses, Ladybug is enhancing each kiosk with useful features for [social drinkers](#), such as coupons for deals at local bars

and a listing of local taxi companies. Users will eventually be able to access their SipSmart profile from their home computer or smart phone and link their SipSmart breathalyzer readings to the BAQ Tracker Mobile app.

Provided by University at Buffalo

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