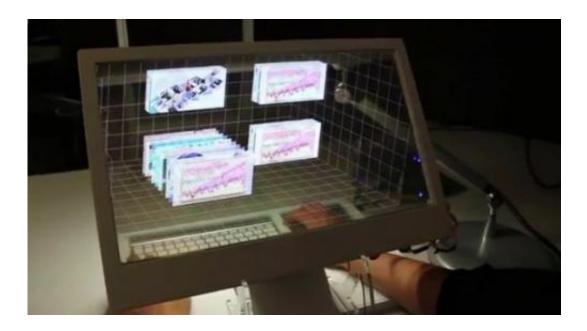# Microsoft demos three new whiz-bang technologies it's working on (w/ video)

February 29 2012, by Bob Yirka

(PhysOrg.com) -- Microsoft isn't really known for giving the world at large much of a clue regarding what it's working on regarding future products (other than Windows) thus it came as rather a surprise when the head of its research and strategy group, Craig Mundie, gave a presentation at TechForum recently, showing off three new technology products the company has in the works.

The first is a see-through interactive 3D desktop display which doesn't

appear to have a name as yet, but is truly one of the coolest displays to come along in quite a while. The reason its transparent is because the users hands and keyboard go behind the display so that both can be used to manipulate 3D images that appear to hover in space between the real objects and those displayed on the OLED screen. To move a cube for example, a user simply reaches back and grabs or pushes it (hand and head movements are tracked by a Kinect device). But that's not all, the display is 3D from virtually any angle it's looked at, within reason of course. This means if a user moves to one side, more of the three dimensionality of the object displayed on screen can be seen, just as would happen were a person to be looking at a true three dimensional object.

Next up is something called a Holoflector, which is of course a combination of Hologram and Reflector, which in this case is a slightly see-through mirror. The whole thing works by projecting holographic images generated by a very large LCD screen onto the back of an equally large semi-transparent mirror. The result is a blending of real world reflected objects (including the user of the system) with holographic images. And as if that isn't enough, the system also employs a Kinect to allow it to monitor and track gestures. Then, all of that is combined with a Windows phone with orientation data that allows the system to know where the phone is, which allows the user to use it as a virtual device, similar to a Wii wand. The net result is a system that is not just eerie, but borders on bubbling over into excitement as it's very clearly a stepping stone to a HoloDeck.

The third technology is something called IllumiShare, which is a little less high tech than the other two, but is perhaps more likely to show up as a product for sale sooner rather than later. It's a technology that allows people to share imagery pertaining to their physical desktop, i.e. the one they use to set papers on, or write with a pen. What Microsoft has done is affix a camera/projector device above the desks of two users in two

different locations. The images collected from one are projected down onto the desktop of the other and vice-versa. In this way, both users can view a shared physical workspace. The device on each desk looks a lot like an overhead desk lamp.

As these demonstrations clearly show, [Microsoft](#) is not content to simply sit back and collect checks from Windows and its Office Suite of products, the company most definitely intends to play a big role in how users interact with their computing devices in the foreseeable future, which based on these demos, appears to be a very good thing.

More information: Microsoft blogs:
[blogs.technet.com/b/next/archi … -reality-mirror.aspx](#)
[blogs.technet.com/b/next/archi … ough-3d-desktop.aspx](#)
[blogs.technet.com/b/next/archi … d-blows-my-mind.aspx](#)