Olympus unwraps MEG4.0 wearable display

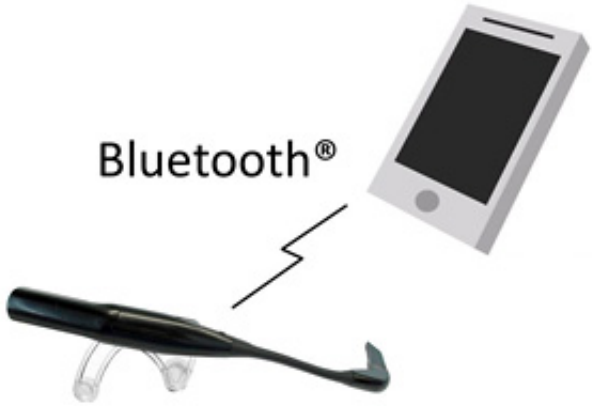
July 5 2012, by Nancy Owano

(Phys.org) -- Adding to the onslaught of vendor prototypes of wearable heads-up display models is Japan based Olympus with its Thursday announcement of the Meg4.0, a glasses mounted display—yes, it needs to be fitted on eyeglasses—with technology that Olympus hopes will differentiate it from other vendors' attempts. MEG4.0, a tiny wearable display weighing in at 30g, can be fitted on most glasses. The wearer connects it to a smartphone with GPS, via Bluetooth 2.1. The MEG4.0 comes with QVGA resolution (320×240) with a 10cd/m^2 – 2,000 cd/m^2 brightness, and built in accelerometer.

Options in battery life include the ability to use the system for eight hours of intermittent use, or two hours of non-stop projection. This

“intermittent” display mode means the product will automatically turn on the display for you for every three minutes for 15 seconds. MEG4.0 has a built-direction acceleration sensor. This allows the device to detect the position of the user's head and react accordingly.

Olympus is counting on promoting its prototype as a culmination of longtime research efforts and on the merits of its own "proprietary optical technology" but has offered no information on an estimated release date or pricing. The company says the product is designed for everyday use.



The announcement will draw interest among those watching new developments in the wearable heads-up display area but the most media attention thus far has been accorded to Google’s step into the future with its Project Glass concept of a wearable device with an integral CPU and memory built into the glasses.

In general, say analysts, the strangeness of a wearable device worn on

eyeglasses transforming a human into an other-worldly creature is wearing away. In its place is greater acceptance that this is a viable way to enjoy Internet connectivity. Walking around with a small rectangle or any other shape over one lens would be increasingly recognized as a convenient computer monitor superimposed on the real world.

Nonetheless, it appears that vendors bringing such products into the marketplace will have to compete as much on looks and design as on technologies that can make the systems work efficiently. Any quick look at reader comments on news reports of new wearable display prototypes reveal that most of the comments, often negative, choose to focus on the products looking too “goofy” or “clumsy.”

The Olympus MEG4.0 has not been spared. The Gizmodo report on the announced prototype led off with, If you thought Google Glasses looked bad, Olympus's augmented reality specs will make you want to drop dead.“

More information:
Olympus press release