

Always-on Android voice-controlled Ubi starts pre-orders

November 4 2012, by Nancy Owano



(Phys.org)—The Toronto-based company Unified Computer Intelligence Corporation has announced that its Ubi is now available for pre-order. Ubi, a Kickstarter project, was named to serve as a shorthand reminder of ubiquitous computing. The Ubi is a plug-in device with speakers, a microphone, and multicolored LED indicator lights. You plug it into a wall outlet, connecting it to your home's WiFi, and the Ubi becomes an always-on, hands free, computer device that stays dormant until you say "Ubi." The word Ubi wakes it up to receive a verbal command or

question ("How many teaspoons in an ounce?").

The company's three-engineer team, Amin Abdossalami, Mahyar Fotoohi, and Leor Greble, promote their [device](#) as always listening, always ready to help, as it will either talk back to you with the [information](#) you seek, or will relay information through its lights. Commenting on the stage of voice recognition for Internet search, they said that they did not believe a project such as the Ubi would have been possible a year ago, but "we're confident that we're now at a point where we can use existing services for speech recognition."

As for the range of the microphone, their tests showed that it can pick up regular-volume voices from 15 feet away. As for [power consumption](#), the Ubi in normal mode will draw less than 3 W. When fully functioning and with LEDs at full power, the level may go up to 10 W. The team said the Ubi is packed with sensors—temperature, humidity, [air pressure](#) and ambient [light sensors](#)—that can provide feedback information for various rooms in a home.

With an [open platform](#), the Ubi is based on Android. and carries 1 GB RAM. The company launched Ubi as a Kickstarter project this summer, and they raised \$229,594 with 1,190 backers.

They now have announced that Ubi is on pre-order at \$219 per device, available in April next year. A ten-pack is \$1399. When the Ubi becomes available for shipment, the price per Ubi will be \$269.

They see the device as going over well with users in larger-size residences where information from the Ubi about rooms—such as baby monitoring, or managing thermostats—would be useful. They also said they see "huge potential" for Ubi as an assistive device for people with physical impairments who, for example, may have limited mobility or vision.

The Ubi team also has a message for developers. The Ubi, on an open-platform, can be tapped into. Unified Computer Intelligence intends to release an SDK "with hooks into all the functionalities of the Ubi."

More information: [www.kickstarter.com/projects/6 ... e-activated-and-al-0](http://www.kickstarter.com/projects/6...e-activated-and-al-0)

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