

Google nixes face-recognition features in Glass eyewear

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A woman tries on Google Glass during the Google I/O developer conference in San Francisco on May 17, 2013. Google late Friday put out word that it won't add face-recognition features to Glass, in a bow to privacy fears raised about the camera-enabled Internet-connected eyewear.

Google late Friday put out word that it won't add face-recognition features to Glass, in a bow to privacy fears raised about the camera-enabled Internet-connected eyewear.

"We won't add [facial recognition](#) features to our products without having strong [privacy protections](#) in place," [Google](#) said in an online message aimed at [software developers](#) creating applications for Glass.

"With that in mind, we won't be approving any facial recognition [Glassware](#) at this time," the message continued, revealing how the company intends to refer to software designed for the devices.

In May, a group of US lawmakers asked Google to answer questions on the [privacy implications](#) and possible "misuse of information" of its Glass project.

Eight US lawmakers in the Congressional Privacy Caucus sent a letter saying they are "curious whether this new technology could infringe on the privacy of the average American."

The lawmakers asked Google to provide information about how it would collect and use data from the Internet-linked eyewear, which has been tested by a small group of users and is expected to hit the market later this year.

Some small establishments in the United States have vowed to ban Glass due to worries about how being able to discreetly take pictures or video might be seen as invasive by patrons.

[Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#) have already launched applications for Google glasses.

Several major news organizations have also tailored applications for Glass, which has only been made available to developers and a limited selection of "explorers" who paid \$1,500 each for the eyewear.

Envisioned uses range from practical tasks such as shopping or

delivering local weather reports to sharing real time video streams of riding cable cars or playing augmented reality games in which the world is the board.

"We've been listening closely to you, and many have expressed both interest and concern around the possibilities of facial recognition in Glass," the California-based Internet titan said in message to 'explorers.'

"We've learned a lot from you in just a few weeks and we'll continue to learn more as we update the software and evolve our policies in the weeks and months ahead.

Glass lets wearers take pictures, record video, send messages, or perform other tasks with touch controls or by speaking "Okay Glass" followed by a command.

Glass connects to the Internet using Wi-Fi hot spots or, more typically, by being wirelessly tethered to mobile phones. Pictures or video can be shared through the Google+ social network.

Google co-founder and chief Larry Page depicted Glass as part of an ongoing effort to get computers "out of the way" so people can focus on lives enriched by what the Internet has to offer.

"We want to make sure we are building experiences that make people really happy," Page said while speaking about Glass at a recent San Francisco gathering of developers.

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