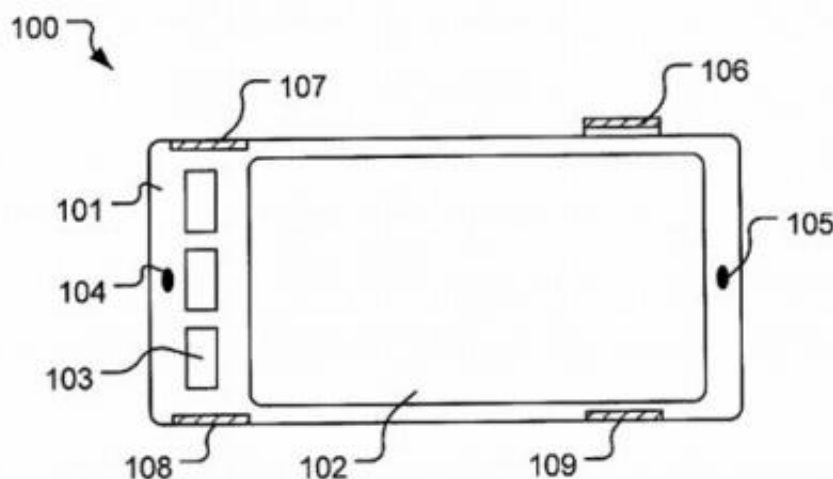


Sony patent proposes camera button to send vital-signs info

July 20 2013, by Nancy Owano



Sony has filed a patent application with the United States Patent and Trademark Office for a way for smartphone users to tag the photos they take with their vital signs. The patent proposes a "camera button with integrated sensors," where the user can tag photos with vital sign information such as blood pressure and body temperature. It's all about integrated sensors.

The [patent application](#) filed last November and made known earlier this week is from Sony Mobile Communications in Lund, Sweden. The patent application describes a mobile device [camera sensor](#) that records

the stats of the photo taker, information including skin conductance, body temperature, blood pressure, respiratory rate, pulse rate, and blood oxygen level.

That information would be recorded into memory and tagged to a specific photo, a new twist in metadata for digital photos. But who would use this and why? You won't get many answers from the patent application, which describes the sensors but does not specify which application areas could result.

Here's at least a possible clue, though. "At Sony, we are targeting the medical business for mid- to long-term growth," the Sony President and CEO, Kazuo Hirai, has said. As a major exporter of consumer electronics, they have not lost sight of the opportunity their technology presents for health products. "We can leverage our technology base in image-capturing sensors, lenses, 3-D technology, image processing, to mention just a few areas," Hirai said in an interview in [Tokyo](#) last year.

The technology in the patent application possibly, as a guess, may be used as part of a patient's dealings with doctor's offices and hospitals. The patient could possibly take a photo and attach vital signs without having to be hooked up to medical equipment. The patent application makes the following point.

"Usually when measuring vital signs, sensors, connected by wires to bulky [measuring equipment](#), have to be placed or used on the person's body. However, in this case the measuring of vital signs has to be done in another way since using cumbersome sensors and measuring equipment is not a viable option."

According to the application, the "first aspect of the present invention relates to a method for tagging a recorded image in a mobile communication device, wherein said recorded image is recorded by a

camera unit in said mobile communication device, the method comprising the steps monitoring, using at least one sensor in said mobile communication device, a user's vital signs, recording sensor information relating to said user's vital signs when said user operates said camera unit in said mobile communication device and is in contact with at least one of said at least one sensors in said mobile communication device, recording an image from said camera unit when said user operates said camera unit in said mobile communication device, determining a tag based on said recorded sensor information, assigning said tag to said recorded image and storing and organizing said recorded image in a memory in said mobile communication device based on said tag."

The sensor information, it added, may comprise information regarding any of the following user's vital signs: body temperature, pulse rate, blood pressure, respiratory rate, [blood oxygen level](#) and skin conductance. The application mentioned a sensor integrated in a camera button in the [mobile communication](#) device, "wherein said sensor and camera button may be operated when said user operates said camera unit for recording an image." The inventor named in the patent application is Gunnar Klinghult.

More information: via [Engadget](#)

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