

Google responds to Glass misuse

February 24 2014, by Tim Dant



For pity's sake, get away from those cacti! Google glassers are out of control.
Credit: Leaflet

Google must have been getting some negative feedback on people misusing Google Glass. It hasn't overtly admitted as much, of course, but we can tell because of a [communiqué](#) that has been issued to "Glass Explorers" – the chosen few pioneers who are roaming round the Google earth, trying out the technology before it is launched to the common people.

The missive contains no direct reference to any misdemeanours but presents the explorers with a list of dos and don'ts, apparently in the hope of discouraging glassers from continuing to make the same mistakes in future. So, what have those eager early adopters been doing wrong? Last on the list (so probably the most important) is being a "Glasshole". Google, it seems, is not keen for its ambassadors to be rude to people who ask questions about their funny glasses.

"Respect others and if they have questions about Glass don't get snappy," Google warns, before reminding Explorers that they are also sales people. "Be polite and explain what Glass does and remember, a quick demo can go a long way."

It sounds like Glassers have been showing their displeasure a little too obviously at being constantly asked questions about the lumps making their faces look lopsided and haven't had the sense to just put the things away. What is worse, they haven't been doing their duty by patiently explaining "that Glass has a lot of the same features as a [mobile phone](#), such as camera, maps and email".

Having been rewarded for their dedication to Google by being allowed to pay \$1,500 for the gizmo, their benefactor now thinks glassers should have their own "etiquette". Some might call this a bit optimistic, given the 30 years it has taken mobile phone users to remember to switch them off at the cinema and not to use them when they're with other people. Actually, even after 30 years, they're still not doing it. Maybe Google should issue etiquette instructions for all those Androids instead.

Glassers also appear to have been "glassing out", according to the list. They've been gazing into the prism, probably with mouth slightly agape and cheek muscles twitching, instead of engaging with those people who are actually in the range of their senses.

Not reacting to news, not laughing at jokes and missing the boss' wise words in meetings, are no-nos. You can't just check out of your physical environment for long periods of time and pretend to be there. Glass is not for reading War and Peace, says Google, it's for short bursts of information.

But the most extravagant mistakes seem to have been made by some extreme sports crazies. Google has felt the need to remind them that bull-riding and cage-fighting are "probably not good ideas" while wearing Glass. Or rather you shouldn't "rock" Glass while doing these hobbies. Does that mean I can ride a bull in my Glass, as long as I do it subtly? It's also important to note that it's absolutely fine to wear my Glass while I'm juggling flaming torches on a beach ball. So it's all quite, quite clear.

It seems a bit hopeless if Google has to implore Glassers to use basic common sense and "ask permission" if they want to use the Glass in a way that involves other people. The company is evidently responding to concerns that Glass is a threat to privacy and that Explorers are running around taking covert footage of everyone they see. But if Google is really buying into these fears, is this how to address them?

In informing us that Glass "can free your hands up to do other things like golfing [and] cooking" Google seems to presume that people can no longer do these sorts of activities because they've become trapped by their existing devices, stabbing and swiping at a little screen in their other hand just to function in the world. I for one can't wait to get some Glass on my face — there seem to be so many exciting new social rules to break! If things are already starting to go awry, imagine what it's going to be like when we've all mounted a beach ball and set light to our juggling sticks.

Mind you, once I'm allowed to join the "Glass Explorer Community", like Groucho, it'll be a club I won't want to be a member of anyway.

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