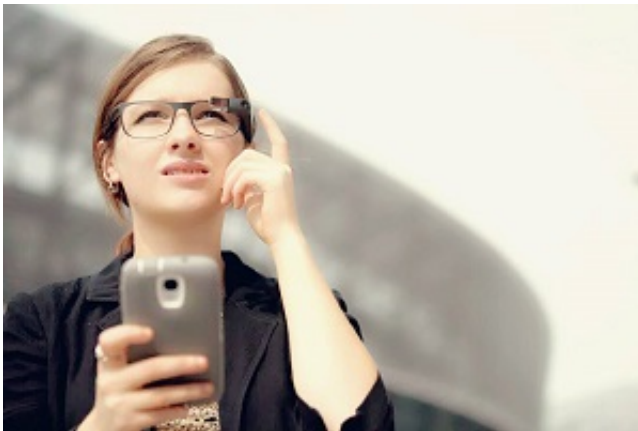


IT student seeks to help mitigate risks of Google Glass

September 26 2014, by Pamela Decoste



Grebenschchikova is an ambassador for the new technology and a part of the Google Glass Explorer program, which provides product feedback. She is excited to be testing and researching the product while it is in the beta stage and not yet available to the public.

As online data breaches continue to challenge companies' and consumers' trust in cybersecurity, UC information-technology major Marina Grebenschchikova is exploring the risks associated with ever-evolving technology advances. Currently, she is applying what she has learned to conducting research with Google Glass, a wearable computer built into eye glasses. The project will expose her to the different types of IT-related questions and challenges that she may encounter in the industry upon graduation in 2017, especially if she pursues a career in software development, working on products or applications from

conception to testing to market entry.

"Technology is growing rapidly," Grebenschchikova says. "What once weighed tons of pounds a decade ago can now rest lightly on our faces. But with great advances come even greater risks. I wonder, 'Are they worth it?'"

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"I have a part in making the technology better and giving feedback," she says. "Currently, I don't think the prototype is probable. The battery doesn't last more than two hours, and it overheats quickly."

In addition to product design questions and challenges, Google Glass is also dealing with issues of privacy and security for its users. The product's discrete photo and filming features, as well as its ability to access e-mail, texts and the Internet via voice and physical commands, all add another layer to ongoing cybersecurity concerns.

Beyond testing Google Glass, Grebenschchikova has envisioned an app that she wants to write for the product that could identify people whom the wearer sees. By using facial-recognition technology and the wearers' database of contacts (from Facebook or cell phone address books, for example), Google Glass could identify people's images on the wearers' screen/lens, she envisions.

"Imagine it! Teachers could take attendance in the blink of an eye," she said. "What Google Glass looks like and does now will resemble, in no way, what it will look like and do five years from now."

Grebenschchikova isn't the only one who is interested in the new technology. In her internship at GE Aviation, where she conducts testing and research, she has also demonstrated Google Glass. GE employees found her demo exciting and thought-provoking, and it was a unique learning opportunity for her, she notes.

"Since I've received the product and have an interest in sharing it with people, I've gotten more comfortable speaking to large groups of people and giving presentations," she admits.

She finds it exciting to see the ways that companies improve their products for optimal user experiences because she also seeks to perpetually improve her understanding of technology and the ways in which it shapes society.

"There are a lot of opportunities for IT students to test products like I'm doing," she says. "A lot of companies want you to try their products. Write a proposal that shows what you want to do, and go accomplish it."

Grebenschchikova was able to fund her Google Glass research through the support offered in the School of Information Technology for undergraduate research. With the help of her faculty advisor, Dr. Hazem Said, director of the School of Information Technology and associate professor, she developed a proposal and secured a research grant to launch her project.

Provided by University of Cincinnati

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