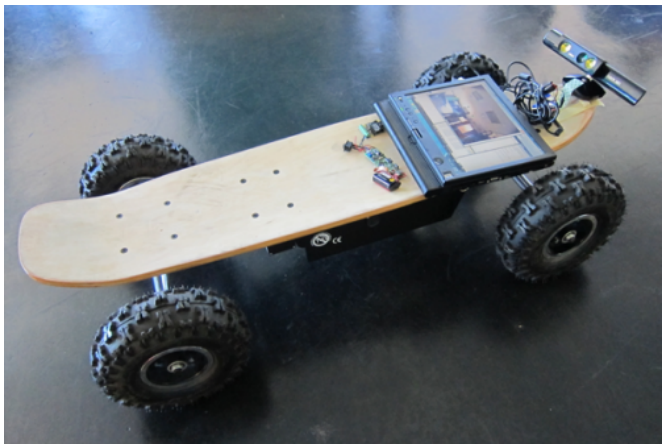
Austin lab team rolls out Kinect-controlled skateboard

10 January 2012, by Nancy Owano



(PhysOrg.com) -- An Austin, Texas, team has developed an electric skateboard that makes use of Microsoft's Kinect and a Samsung tablet running Windows 8 to go places on a piece of transport dubbed The Board of Awesomeness. Scheduled for showing at the CES show in Las Vegas, the board teams up with the Windows 8 Samsung tablet and Kinect controller. The smartened-up device has capabilities that include combined video and speech recognition location and accelerometer data.

The user can control the speed at which the board travels, and the board is capable of speeds of up to 32mph The BoA has three speed settings, slow, medium, and fast.

By pushing your hands forward you tell the Kinect that you want to go faster; pull your hands back to do the opposite. To get started, the user raises hands to signal the Kinect device, looks for the red dots to appear on the hands, and then is ready to roll. The Kinect movements needed from then on are pushing the hands forward to speed up and pulling the hands back to slow down or stop.

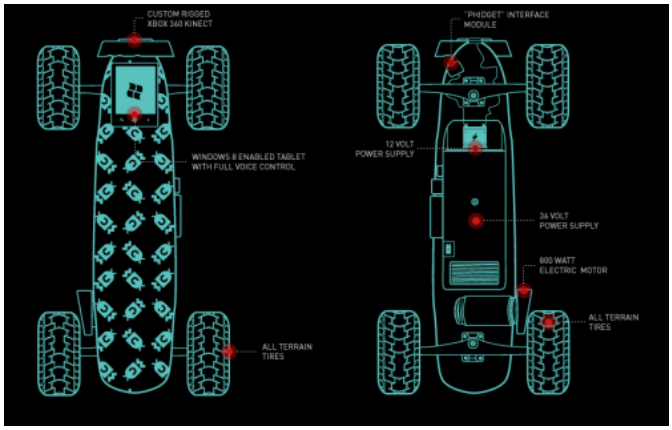
The Kinect device transmits the user's gestures and movement to the Samsung Windows 8 tablet. The tablet, described as the board's central brain, sits at the top of the board.

The BoA creators, Chaotic Moon Labs, is a division of developers Chaotic Moon. This is a team that is into the serious business of being what it calls a "mobile application studio" that includes custom development, and the skateboard being showcased is a project demonstrating "how perceptive computing can change the way we look at user experiences."

The Chaotic Moon motto is a rather cheeky "We're smarter than you" but their site explains in more friendly fashion that "We are rocket scientists who decided to focus on mobile media rather than dangerous rockets."

As for Kinect, the Chaotic Moon team was set to

explore, like other developers exploring present-day Kinect, more novel ways to use the interface than for living room fun with indoor games. What about transportation, they asked, in the outside world. They are proud of the way they were able to re-engineer Kinect "to operate something other than a gaming avatar."



Chaotic Moon Labs lightly refers to their effort as having put Kinect under the microscope to show how they could make Kinect do everything it's not supposed to do.

"Using a motorized longboard custom rigged with a Microsoft Xbox 360 Kinect device, Samsung Windows 8 enabled tablet with full voice control, a phidget interface module, and all terrain tires, we took Project Sk8 to the streets," according to the team.

Chaotic Moon will be investing an additional six million dollars into its labs division this year.

More information:
www.chaoticmoon.com/labs/board-of-awesomeness/

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