

Google Glass advocate to developers: Seize the moment (w/ video)

April 8 2013, by Nancy Owano



(Phys.org) —Along with dancing elephants and magnificent acrobats, there's nothing that can draw an audience, especially curious developers, more than a New Paradigm. Computing machines that are reduced from fridge-sized boxes to computers that can fit on a desktop. Telephones without cables that can fit in the pocket and be used while you're walking. Still greater phones that give you Internet access, play music, and take pictures. And in 2013, the world awaits what Google positions as a Newer Paradigm, Google Glass. (Not to be mistakenly called

GlassES, as the device is worn over one eye only.)

This month, as a service to all interested developers, [Google](#) posted a video so that everyone can see and hear what Developer Advocate Timothy Jordan had to say about Google Glass, when he spoke at the 2013 South by Southwest Interactive conference last month.

Jordan was there to talk up the Google Mirror API, which will help to build services for the Google Glass project. "It's about technology when you want it, and out of the way when you don't," said Jordan, which sums up his statements of support for why Google Glass is a new chapter for our experiences with information access, retrieval, and release.

He told the audience he had found it "weird" at one event, where audience members had "all these screens" up in the air, and he thought about how these people in the audience were so busy watching their little screens instead of the actual event.

Google is building a [new paradigm](#), he said, where something will blend in, not compete, with your life. Google, he added, is giving you the technology you love, but not taking you "out of the moment."

Proceeding to getting under the hood, Jordan announced that he was talking to developers. He emphasized, though, that "we are not done. We can see more things before we release the [API](#)." He said as work continued, Google welcomed developer feedback.

As Jordan demonstrated, the user's Google Glass functions will include control with voice, hand and head gestures, and will enjoy capabilities of audio, transmitting and receiving messages, and recording video. Google is prepping Glass for a widespread consumer release at the end of this year.

Hopefully, developers who pursue the New Paradigm and run with it will be able to enjoy more than vapid promotionals of a moneyed leisure set of people recording memories of their hot air balloon rides and water-slide antics. Hopefully, promotionals will offer real-world uses by a more universal cross section of people who do other tasks.

Google Glass has medical potential for surgeons, who might use it during surgery to view scans or other images as a supplement to their direct visual field; international trade and relief workers may use it as instant language translators; travelers might use it to check bus, train, or airplane arrivals and departures. The list could go on and on.

Nonetheless, the promise of Google Glass keeping us in the moment has some doubters saying, no, wait a moment. First, there have been concerns over the logic of Google Glass being a liberator, when head or voice commands or touching a tiny touchpad attached to one arm of the headset, are still needed. They might argue that conventional smartphone taps are not that big a deal either. Second, there have been concerns about the logic of liberating users into the moment when other disconcerted people around the Google glass wearer may feel the person is half-listening, half-interested in what they are saying and doing, as the wearer is anticipating at any "moment" to look up and do something with the Google Glass. Last, there are those who express concern about eye safety.

Concerns have been voiced that a device in which the wearer views the display through only one eye may affect neural circuitry, and could lead to visual confusion and eyestrain, where the two eyes differ in focusing on one set distance versus another shifting distance.

In an interview in January this year, Babak Parviz, the head of the Google Glass project, told *IEEE Spectrum* that Google was well aware of the fact that some were voicing concern that smart glasses could have

unpleasant side effects such as eyestrain and visual confusion.

In response, Parviz said that Google has taken the concerns seriously from the beginning of the [project](#). "We've looked at this, and we've made sure the device is safe, visually and otherwise."

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Citation: Google Glass advocate to developers: Seize the moment (w/ video) (2013, April 8)
retrieved 20 September 2024 from

<https://phys.org/news/2013-04-google-glass-advocate-seize-moment.html>

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