Google Glasses

And Seven Other Wearable Technological Inventions That Could Change Your Life

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Google flexed its augmented technological muscles last year with the dramatic sky-diving demonstration of Project Glass at Google I/O 2012. Attendees were given the option of ordering a pair of the glasses for $1,500 so that developers could take them away and come up with inventive and creative uses for them. With the hype surrounding the glasses, you'd be forgiven for thinking that they were the only wearable computing coming to the market. In reality, there are plenty of products that will soon be making their way to an online retailer near you.

And with these new types of products — these computers we can wear — we'll be entering another phase of our digital journey, a phase where the technology goes from being something noticeable, and in some cases cumbersome, to something which will slip quietly into the background, integrated into our clothes and the objects that surround us.

Project Glass

We're all well aware of this product and if they do it right, it could be as revolutionary for computing as the iPhone was. Google's ambitions for it include people being able to see the world through your eyes via image and streaming video, and, more importantly for most of us, it will provide you with the functionality of a smartphone but through glasses.

Catalytic Clothing

This project involves air-purifying clothes covered in a spray-on nanotechnology that sucks pollutants from the air and turns them into something more benign. It's the brainchild of fashion professor Helen Storey and chemist Tony Ryan, and it can transform the toxic greenhouse gas nitrous oxide into water-soluble nitrate. The more people wear the product the more it can positively impact a local environment.

Nike+ FuelBand

One area where wearable technology could have an impact is exercise, syncing up devices, and crunching and analyzing data. The Nike+ FuelBand measures your activity throughout the day, tracks your steps, and notes how many calories you burn. It then syncs the data to your iPhone. It's also a watch.

Bionic Contact Lenses

This is the inevitable goal for products like Google glasses, moving from bulky spectacles to imperceptible contact lenses to read text, check emails, and augment your vision with Terminator-style info or augmented sculptures and artworks. You could also wear them to play video games. The technology was trialed at the University of Washington in Seattle, and they're currently safe and feasible but lacking a good power source and only have a single-pixel display. But give it a few years.

Super Thin "Electronic Skin"

Originally developed by researchers at the University of Illinois and Princeton University to remotely monitor patients in a more unobtrusive manner, these stretchy wireless electronics can be stuck onto the skin so your body becomes just another part of the network.

The electronics are very thin silicon chips sandwiched between two protective layers of polyimide, a type of polymer, and the uses for them are only just beginning to be explored.

Pebble: Epaper Watch

Pebble raised over ten times its Kickstarter goal, and it's a smartwatch that runs apps and also connects wirelessly with an iPhone or Android device via Bluetooth. It's small, lightweight, has a high-resolution epaper display, and a three-axis accelerometer. It can monitor pace and distance for runners or cyclists, and you can also check messages and control music on your phone. It has a seven-day battery life.

Wearable Gestural Interfaces

These wearable gestural interfaces — much like the OmniTouch — are in development from both Microsoft and MIT's Pattie Maes and Pranav Mistry with SixthSense. Both devices augment the physical world by projecting digital information, which can then be interacted with using hand gestures. Both are fairly bulky, but they're only going to become more refined.

Apollo Dress Shirt

This is another Kickstarter project that smashed its funding goal. The shirt, from Ministry of Supply, uses NASA Spacesuit technology to regulate body temperature using "phase change material" that keeps you sweat-free. The shirt absorbs and releases heat and takes it away from your body. It's also anti-odor and wrinkle-free.

* Source: The Creators Project "Google Glasses And 7 Other Wearable Tech Inventions That Could Change Your Life" http://thecreatorsproject.vice.com/blog/google-glasses-and-7-other-wearable-tech-inventions-that-could-change-your-lifechina.html. Accessed: October 30, 2013.

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