

Eye-tracking software will look at you shop

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New computer software will soon be keeping an eye on you, or on your eyes, when you go shopping. It is called the Sideways project because it tracks the

movement of your eyes as you glance at products on shelves. The researchers, from Britain's Lancaster University, told the BBC that the technology would be a common feature in stores before the end of the decade. Senior researcher Andreas Bulling said: "The system uses a single ordinary camera...[It] detects the faces of people walking by and calculates where the eyes are relative to the eye corners." This information is then used to flash up adverts related to what products you were looking at longest as you pass by video screens ahead of you.

Eye-tracking technology is being used in a number of different situations. One is to help motorists better identify cyclists on roads. Studies suggest drivers are five times likelier to spot pedestrians than people riding bicycles. This could significantly cut the number of road deaths. Eye-tracking can also be used to allow people to use their eyes as a mouse to scroll through and select content on screens. Disabled people are already using this technology to enhance their daily mobility. Last month the tech giant Samsung launched a smartphone that monitors what users look at on-screen. Mr Bulling said: "It is really gaining momentum. I fully expect this technology to become available widely in the near future."

Sources: BBC / New Scientist

Writing

Software that tracks what we look at is dangerous and should not be allowed in stores. Discuss.

Chat

Talk about these words from the article.

computer software / shopping / glance at products / common feature / adverts / technology / motorist / mouse / scroll / smartphone / gaining momentum / near future

True / False

- Stores will use software to cut the amount of shoplifting by customers. T / F
- The software will monitor what products you look at. T / F
- Researchers say the software could be in wide use by 2020. T / F
- Information from your eyes will alert staff when you will pay for goods. T / F
- Eye-tracking could help reduce the number of cyclists hit by cars. T / F
- Software now lets the eyes do things the computer mouse does. T / F
- The technology has not yet been put to use with disabled people. T / F
- A researcher suggested the software would not be that mainstream. T / F

Synonym Match

- | | |
|----------------------|------------------|
| 1. keeping an eye on | a. display |
| 2. tracks | b. choose |
| 3. glance | c. aspect |
| 4. feature | d. recognise |
| 5. flash up | e. follows |
| 6. situations | f. improve |
| 7. identify | g. circumstances |
| 8. select | h. watching |
| 9. enhance | i. believe |
| 10. expect | j. look |

Discussion – Student A

- Did you like reading this article? Why/not?
- If an eye-tracker is acceptable, how about a speech-tracker?
- Should the eye-tracker be compulsory in cars to reduce accidents?
- Do you like the idea of using your eyes as a mouse?
- What other functions can you think of for eye-tracking?
- How much is the eye-tracker like science fiction?
- How could eye-tracking help you study English?
- What questions would you like to ask the researchers?

Phrase Match

- | | |
|------------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| 1. software will soon be | a. be a common feature |
| 2. it tracks the | b. in the near future |
| 3. the technology would | c. by video screens ahead |
| 4. calculates where the eyes are | d. as a mouse |
| 5. as you pass | e. movement of your eyes |
| 6. used in a number | f. to spot pedestrians |
| 7. drivers are five times likelier | g. keeping an eye on you |
| 8. allow people to use their eyes | h. daily mobility |
| 9. enhance their | i. relative to the eye corners |
| 10. available widely | j. of different situations |

Discussion – Student B

- What did you think when you read the headline?
- What springs to mind when you hear the word 'software'?
- What do you think of eye-tracking software?
- Is the software an invasion of privacy?
- Should people be able to choose if they want their eyes tracked?
- Would the videos you see after eye-tracking make you spend more?
- Do you think this software is like Big Brother in the book "1984"?
- What will happen to the footage from cameras that tracked your eyes?

Spelling

- the Sideways eortpjc
- the mtmveeno of your eyes
- necagl at products on shelves
- a common tferuea
- a single ydrnoiar camera
- laevriet to the eye corners
- a number of different osuiastnit
- to help toiotsmrs
- five times likelier to spot peidsarenst
- fitynsclngai cut the number of road deaths
- acheenn their daily mobility
- really gaining netmmuom

Answers – Synonym Match

1. h	2. e	3. j	4. c	5. a
6. g	7. d	8. b	9. f	10. i

Role Play

Role A – Eye-tracking scientist

You think eye-tracking is fantastic and will change many things in our lives. Tell the others three reasons why. Nothing can stand in the way of technology. Tell those who dislike the software they are livening in the past. Tell them also there is no lack of privacy with the software.

Role B – Store owner

You think the eye-tracking software is the greatest invention since the computer. Tell the others three reasons why. You are sure it will make everyone's life much better when they go shopping. You don't understand people who are against it. Tell them all data from cameras will be confidential.

Role C – Average Jo

You are shocked that eye-tracking software will be in stores. Tell the others three reasons why. You are fed up at being watched my cameras. This software really takes away our privacy. You do not want to be watched in a store and then told what to buy.

Role D – Dark glasses maker

You think the eye-tracking software is a menace to society. Tell the others three reasons why. However, it is a great business opportunity for you. Sales of your dark glasses will skyrocket – people will wear dark glasses so the eye-tracker can't follow their eye movements.

Speaking - Eyes

How can we use them better with technology? Rank these and share your rankings with your partner. Put the best at the top. Change partners often.

- | | |
|----------------------|----------------------------|
| • hands-free driving | • read and then hear words |
| • play games | • photograph what we see |
| • x-ray vision | • open doors ahead of us |
| • change TV channels | • paint what we see |

Answers – True False

a	F	b	T	c	T	d	F	e	T	f	T	g	F	h	F
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Answers to Phrase Match and Spelling are in the text.