

May 2003

(This Press Release described a very early version of the Smoke Rings project. Later we added a third sensor and developed a sketch-level implementation of the software simulator. For more information about this work, see <<http://carolstrohecker.info/ProjectPages/smoke.html>>.)

WEARABLE GADGET TRACKS EXPOSURE TO ENVIRONMENTAL SMOKE

Media Lab Europe Research Adds Fuel To Debate Over Whether Smoking Should Be Banned In Public Places

Researchers at Media Lab Europe (MLE), the innovation and research centre in Dublin, are developing a wearable device that allows people to monitor environmental smoke and project the damage passive smoking can do to their heart, lungs and life expectancy. Speaking about the device, lead researcher Dr. Carol Strohecker said, "This tool can help people to increase their awareness of health risks due to passive smoke exposure. The device calls attention to the impact of personal and public decisions about smoking in public venues."

The mobile sensing device developed by MLE's Everyday Learning group detects chemical components of environmental tobacco smoke. The readings are displayed on a 12-hour clock, allowing wearers to see changes in their smoke exposure and reflect on harmful locations and patterns in their daily routine.

Currently the device is paired with a transparent fumatorium that includes a simulated smoker, allowing viewers to make real-time comparisons of the visible quantities of smoke with sensor readings of smoke components. A planned simulation environment will depict the sensor readings as attributes of cartoon characters and enable users to project effects of smoke-related toxicities on these characters.

Media Lab Europe demonstrated this and other research projects concerned with health and well-being at the World Health Organisation summit in Geneva last week.

About Media Lab Europe

Media Lab Europe (MLE) is an international research and innovation laboratory. It is also the European research partner of the world renowned MIT Media Lab. MLE's interdisciplinary and collaborative approach to innovation provides a unique environment for exploring advanced research that facilitates the development of technologies that expand human potential throughout society. MLE is a not-for-profit organisation that supports its work through corporate, community, academic and public research partnerships. For more information please visit www.medialabeurope.org <<http://www.medialabeurope.org>>.