

## Beam+ remote presence system aims for home entry

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(Phys.org) —What an idea: remote presence machines that roll around from office to office and on trade show floors, helping professionals save on travel but, even though not with the group, still able to maintain a close-up presence anyway. That was the benefit, allowing technology to give people the closest experience to actually being there, behind Beam

for professional use. Now there is a remote presence system that is being promoted as a family-ready product designed to help relatives away from home to keep contact with family members at home. The Beam+ is launching in limited quantity for \$995. After the first thousand units are gone, the price will be set to its normal level of \$1995. The first-thousand units will start shipping in the summer. The company behind the Beam+ is Palo Alto, California-based Suitable Technologies.

Now introducing a Beam+ suited for home use, the company is turning to a product for at-home scenarios where [family members](#)—a spouse, a grandparent or any other contact——can call in remotely, with their faces displayed on the screen, more "there" than during a standard video call. This time the caller gets to move around, motoring across a room or rooms, for face to face interaction with the people and their immediate surroundings at home.

The company team's explanation of what first led them to the Beam concept: "Despite the variety of existing technologies like email, chat, and videoconferencing, we found that our remote team members felt isolated, things got lost in translation, and calling multiple meetings for daily work was disruptive. Then it hit us: What if our distributed team could just *be* together?"

A computer and a Wi-Fi connection are the starting points in working with Beam. The new Beam+ device rolls around easily, with its base on wheels, and the 10-inch LCD flat-panel screen is positioned on top of the neck. A promotional video shows a machine with a grandmother's face praising the grandchildren's art work. Another scenario shows a machine rolling into the children's bedroom where the away-from-home father on the screen says goodnight to his children. Still another shows on the screen a husband at the office checking in, and reassuring his wife at home that he will call an electrician after she tells him the dryer does not work.

The features of the Beam+ include two 640x480 HDR cameras, with 30 frames-per-second video. The software works with computers with Windows 7, Windows 8 or Mac OSX 10.6, 10.7, 10.8, and 10.9. A battery provides two hours of call time and takes four hours to charge.

Company CEO Scott Hassan, the company's CEO, before Suitable, founded the robotics company Willow Garage.

**More information:** [www.suitabletech.com/](http://www.suitabletech.com/)

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