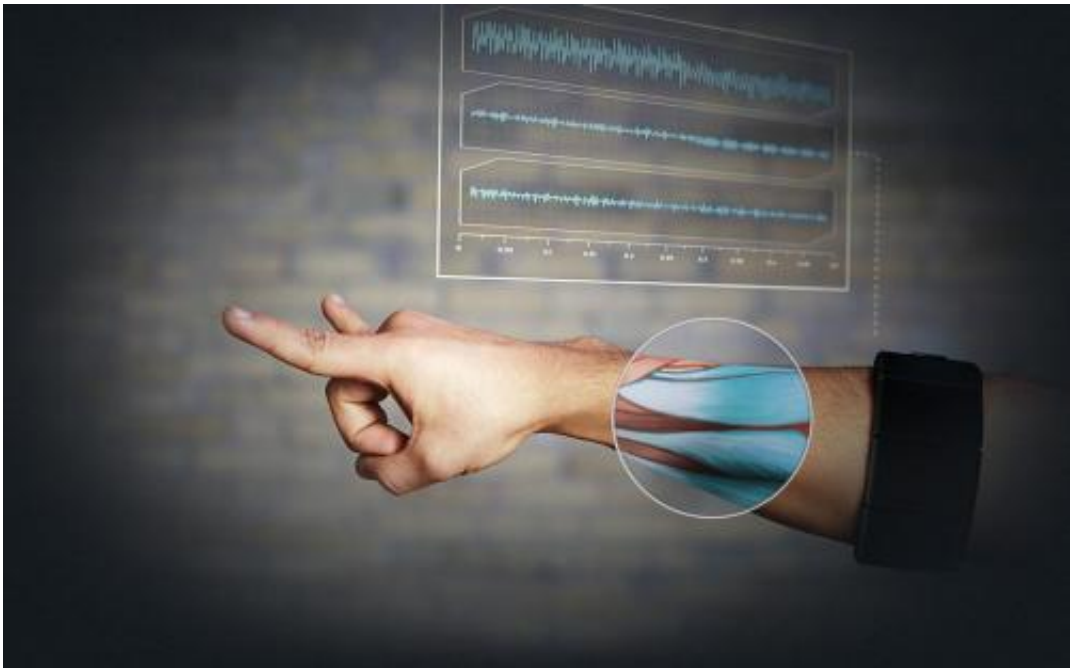
Thalmic Labs' Alpha users explore Myo with Oculus

February 13 2014, by Nancy Owano



(Phys.org) —Gaming pundits have been predicting that 2014 will be a good year for devices that can deliver great immersive gaming experiences. Proof might lie in a match between the Oculus Rift virtual reality headset from Oculus VR together with the Myo armband from Canada-based Thalmic Labs. The union would combine accurate simulated head movements from the headset with a wearable one size fits all arm band where remote controls are actually the user's muscles.

Darrell Etherington of *TechCrunch* said earlier this month that an email from Thalmic Labs CEO Stephen Lake confirmed that some efforts are under way. The cross-device potential lies in simply giving players an enjoyably immersive game experience. Thalmic Labs CEO Stephen Lake said in his email that some projects were using Myo and Rift. He said developers in the company's Alpha programs were integrating both with Unity for some games.

The "Alpha" program he mentioned is the company's opportunity for select developers to get their hands on an early version and access to the Myo SDK. Said Etherington: "Myo hooking up with the Rift is like chocolate meeting peanut butter, and it'll be interesting to see how deep that relationship eventually goes."

Founded in 2012, Thalmic Labs designed its Myo as a gesture-control band that makes use of the user's electrical activity in muscles to wirelessly control a connected device, such as computers and phones. Taking its cues from muscle movements. the Myo can figure out what gesture the hand is making, sensing motions and rotations of hand and forearm. (Exploring the technology, *IEEE Spectrum* noted how Mayo is built around eight electromyography muscle activity sensors and three axes each for accelerometer, gyro, and magnetometer. The user gets forearm gesture sensing and relative motion sensing, as opposed to absolute position. "The sensors can read all of the muscles that control your fingers, letting them spy on finger position as well as grip strength.")

The armband works with Windows PC, Mac, iOS, and Android. It connects via Bluetooth 4.0 Low Energy. An ARM processor and rechargeable lithium ion battery are among its other features. The FAQ page on the Thalmus Labs site asks about the battery life. The company's answer is, "We are constantly optimizing the battery life performance and are shooting for multi-day usage."

The company's FAQ page also says the plan is to begin shipping final Myo units in mid-2014, after all Myo Developer Kits have been shipped out. In a *Techvibes* interview posted on January 30, Lake said the company is shipping Alpha units in waves. "We started to ship out Myo Alpha units in December and are continuing to do so in waves. Final Myo hardware will start shipping to a broader audience later this year, starting with the Myo developer kits in a few months."

More information: www.thalmic.com/en/myo/

© 2014 Phys.org

Citation: Thalmic Labs' Alpha users explore Myo with Oculus (2014, February 13) retrieved 9 April 2024 from https://techxplore.com/news/2014-02-thalmic-labs-alpha-users-explore.html

This document is subject to copyright. Apart from any fair dealing for the purpose of private study or research, no part may be reproduced without the written permission. The content is provided for information purposes only.