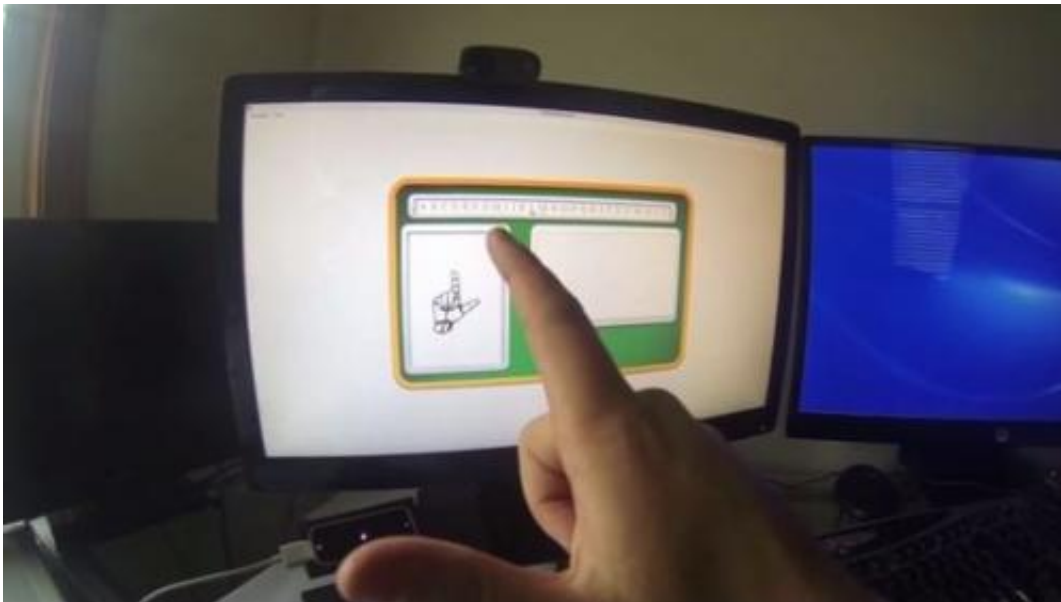# Leap Motion accelerator hears potential of tablet for deaf

June 9 2014, by Nancy Owano

A group of friends who met while they were studying at the Rochester Institute of Technology moved to San Francisco where they are working on a tablet for the deaf. They have a high level of commitment and passion for seeing this prototype through to market for good reason. They are all deaf and they understand how a form factor like this could lower communication barriers in everyday exchanges. They have formed a company MotionSavvy.

According to a report in *TechCrunch*, they aim for a consumer-facing product in September 2015. Their [tablet](#) case can utilize the power of the Leap Motion controller in order to translate American Sign Language (ASL) into English and back. The MotionSavvy case carries the Leap, and the MotionSavvy team is to build a full scale translating system, leveraging Leap. The deaf person signs into the tablet and the signs are converted to speech or text, and that hearing person can send a message back; the tablet is an enabler of a two-way conversation between the deaf person and the hearing person.

Seth Gerlis, in a video from iDeafNews, visited the team in their San Francisco office, and examined their prototype for the first time. Gerlis signed into the prototype and he realized how the prototype could read his signing. "I can't imagine this," he said. "This means a deaf person can communicate through this prototype."

The business has four deaf founders, CEO Ryan Hait-Campbell, Wade Kellard, Jordan Stemper and Alex Opalka working on how Leap Motion technology can successfully convert the deaf person's signing into voice and text. The tablet is designed to read and model users' hands and fingers as they communicate with sign language. They are using language processing software to analyze the context and try to predict what the user is signing. Ultimately, they would like to see ASL translation become as mobile and natural as possible, whether via tablet or phone, so that the deaf can be understood everywhere they go. MotionSavvy eventually wants to have its system work with any mobile phone. CEO Rait-Campbell said in a video said, "Imagine having a phone where you can sign into it and the hearing person can talk back and you read it. Imagine that."

MotionSavvy's software can accurately track the full alphabet, numbers and basic phrases. They are developing quicker ways to add new words into the system; they aim to bring expert signers on board to train their

ever-growing dictionary. TechCrunch reported that over 800 deaf people have signed up so far for the beta test. The team believes that they will have a product ready for consumers by September 2015.

While at RIT the group won a prize at a big idea contest and then joined a Saunders Startup program where they were taught how to start and build a business. After the program, they were accepted to the LEAP Axlr8r program. They moved out to San Francisco, and have been working on a prototype to show the public.

The case itself would include a Windows tablet and there would be a monthly subscription fee, according to TechCrunch, saying that the team is "playing around with" a price of $600 and a monthly software subscription fee of $20. TechCrunch also said the company is in the process of raising a $1.5 million seed round.

More information: * www.leapmotion.com/blog/inside … ds-with-motionsavvy/
www.youtube.com/watch?v=hVEdLQSGij8#t=150
www.youtube.com/watch?v=Zk1Ufd5cA14#t=16
* www.leapaxlr8r.com/blog/giving … -a-voice-motionsavvy
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