

Answers in a shake with Microsoft's Torque (w/ Video)

December 7 2014, by Nancy Owano



Microsoft Garage is what it sounds like, a techie haven where hackers, inventors and hackers who are potentially good inventors can pass around ideas and engage in team work so that ideas grow into real projects. Torque is one of those results. On Friday Microsoft said that it has a Torque app, powered by Bing, for Android.

The new launch is Torque version 2.0. The Torque app was actually launched in October, but only for Android smartwatches. "One of the big things that we heard from people who don't have an Android Wear watch is that they would love to be able to search Bing just by shaking

their phone. Now, you can do just that. After you've installed Torque on your phone, just shake and say what you want to [search](#) for," said the Bing blog posting by the Torque team. The app is up on Google Play. Discussing what is new, the Torque team said they added support for Torque on Android phones, new answers including local events and flight status, a way to launch applications with the twist gesture, and more reliable gesture and voice recognition. The app can give instant answers to a voice-enabled web search.

"With a flick of your wrist, you can say what you want to your Android Wear watch. If you don't have your watch, you can shake your phone to do similar thing to the virtual watch on your [phone](#). Torque on your phone is both a watch demo and a useful tool to complement existing mobile search without breaking the flow of your active application. Your app is not completely blocked by the virtual Torque watch so you can keep the context of your mobile app while talking to your virtual watch. You need to check 'shake anytime' if you want to use it on your phone."

Torque makes uttering "OK Google" unnecessary each time you ask a question. It works with Android Wear or Android Phone. The [app](#) currently supports US English only. [Tested](#) watches have included Asus ZenWatch, LG G watch, and Samsung Gear Live.

A blog posting on Microsoft's Fire Hose site said Torque was developed in less than three months as a side project and that it "represents Microsoft's evolving culture, where experimentation is encouraged, failure is an option, apps are platform-agnostic and getting them to customers quickly for review is key to [learning](#) what will work and what won't." Manish Singh in BGR India commented that "Microsoft under Satya Nadella has [opened](#) up," and the company is working on making products for all platforms. "Well, we're grateful to Microsoft for not making its users yell "OK, Torque" into their [smartphones](#)," said David Murphy in PCMag. Torque Voice Search as described on Google Play

offers some examples of the kinds of questions you can ask. They include a local business search; sports scores; calculator by voice; world clock; stock price information; simple Qs (How old is—; How tall is —) airplane flight status, and more.

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