

Mobile input device Phree invites you to jot, sketch, take notes

May 21 2015, by Nancy Owano



A Kickstarter campaign is heating up over a device called Phree. It's for writing on nearly any surface you want to and seeing your writing instantly appear on your screen. In a promotional video, a presenter says,

"In 2015 we love our touchscreens." Only, there's one problem: "They are not a perfect input device." Users need better precision and more space, and so Phree was created, taking you way beyond the screen.

This is a high-resolution mobile input device, where you can sketch or jot down notes, thoughts, addresses, numbers, and such, without the added effort of having to unlock a phone, open an app and wait.

Phree will connect to a range of devices: phone, tablet, laptop, TV, anything with a Bluetooth connection. They said Phree is compatible with Office, OneNote, EverNote, Acrobat, and more. Also, they said Phree supports all major phone, tablet and PC operating systems – Android, iOS, Windows, OSX, Linux.

Opher Kinrot, Uri Kinrot, chief engineer and Gilad Lederer are co-founders of the Tel Aviv-based company OTM Technologies, which created Phree. Elisha Tal is the chief designer.

The design involves an oval cross-section for usefulness and comfort. Held in writing position, Phree's touch display always faces the user. One can touch to change from pen to highlighter or from red to blue or from messaging to dialing. Phree prototypes are in black, graphite, silver and gold.

They have turned to Kickstarter to push Phree closer to market and delivery stages.

The key driver that enables Phree is "Optical Translation Measurement" (OTM) technology, which precisely tracks hand motion across a surface. They have engineered and built a compact optical sensor that fits at the tip of a pen-like device.

The OTM sensor is a 3D laser interferometer. It tracks the relative motion of a nearby surface, they said, by measuring the interference signal between a laser beam projected on the surface and reflections from the surface. The signal is translated to X-Y-Z motion information by their signal-processing algorithms running on a small, integrated electronics component.



The battery will last around one week for typical usage. Full charging time is about one hour.

For developers, the good news is that this is an open platform. They said, "An open API allows developers to make use of the screen for specific interaction with their applications. The API provides access to additional sensor information such as vertical (Z) motion data, as well as access to the accelerometer."

The Kickstarter page lists the range of prices and reward details. At the time of this writing, for example, a pledge of \$316 would bring a twin pack of two Phree devices. A pledge of \$219 would get one Phree and case. Estimated delivery date for both price offers is April 2016.



More information: [www.kickstarter.com/projects/1 ... the-world-your-paper](http://www.kickstarter.com/projects/1...the-world-your-paper)

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