

Tipster talks about Google's Project Soli kit invites

August 31 2015, by Nancy Owano



Google has its eyes on a future of radar-based technology for hand gestures with wearables, and to a future where you can interact with wearable technology without adding physical controls such as buttons.

Your fingers can be the buttons. Earlier this year, Project Soli was announced as an interaction sensor making use of radar technology.

A Google Advanced Technology and Projects division (ATAP) video was posted on May 29 telling the world about Soli.

"My name is Ivan Poupyrev, said the technical program lead at ATAP. Capturing the possibilities of the human hand has been was one of his passions, he stated. How can we apply the capabilities to the virtual world? He said they use radars. There's nothing to break—no lenses, no moving parts. Ivan Poupyrev said in the video: "Radar has been used for many things— to track cars, big objects, satellites and planes. We're using it to track micro motions, twitches of human hands, and use that to interact with wearables and other [computing](#) devices."

M Dee Dubroff, *InventorSpot.com*, said "Project Soli focuses on the fact that the ability to function is not always the job of the device but rather the movements of the user, specifically, hands and [fingers](#)."

She said the project relies on a tiny chip with radar-like capabilities and it can pick up the slightest of movements.

Alex Davies in *Tom's Hardware* detailed what went on at an ATAP [presentation](#) earlier this year, when Poupyrev showed [hand gestures](#) and how they could be applied for interactions. Davies talked about rubbing thumb and index finger together to simulate turning a dial, changing time on a simulated watch face and using distance to control if the hours or minutes were adjusted, depending on how far a hand was from the sensor.

Radar has some unique properties; it has very high positional accuracy, according to the video, where the tiniest motions can be sensed.

Jaime Lien, lead research engineer, Project Soli, said the team's focus was taking radar hardware and turning it into a gesture sensor.

The latest news is that Google is notifying developers of an impending Project Soli Alpha DevKit. Liam Spradlin wrote in *Android Police* that Google was sending out applications for a small batch of Project Soli dev kits. "According to a tipster," said Spradlin, "Google has begun notifying interested parties of an impending "Soli Alpha DevKit," asking that those notified fill out an application for the chance to receive one."

Spradlin added, "The email says that those selected to receive a DevKit will get a development board and SDK, along with the opportunity to participate in a Soli Alpha developer workshop at some point in the future."

Potential developers in return are asked to participate in the private user group, accept software updates, and "make something really cool."

Poupyrev had made special note in the video that was done earlier this year that he was really looking forward to releasing this initiative to the development community.

According to the *Android Police* story this month, though, Google noted that the DevKits were very limited. There are only "a few dozen" to go around, said *Android Police*, but the email also said the team was working toward a beta [announcement](#) "later this year."

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