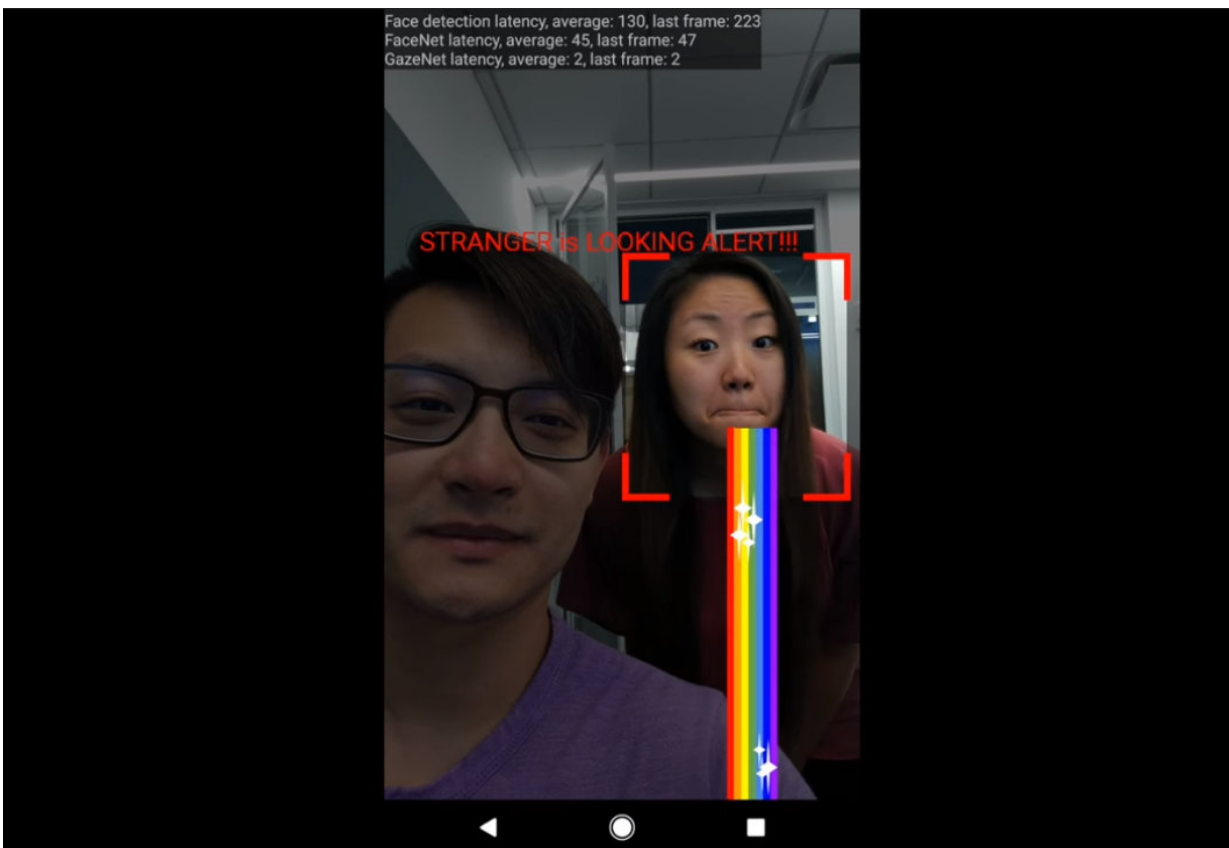


# Google video demonstrates 'stranger is looking alert' for smartphones

November 29 2017, by Bob Yirka

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(Tech Xplore)—A pair of researchers at Google has released a video on YouTube demonstrating a possible new feature for Android phones—a "stranger is looking" alert that pops up if the phone detects another

person behind the user trying to view the screen. Google has not released many details regarding the feature but has announced that two of its team members, Hee Jung Ryu and Florian Schroff, will be presenting their project, which has been named "an electronic screen protector," at the upcoming Neural Information Processing Systems conference.

When using a [phone](#), people are at a distinct disadvantage when conducting private business, whether tapping out a text or a bank PIN number—they are by necessity facing their phone. In such a position, they have no way of knowing if someone is behind them looking over their shoulder to see what is being typed, hence the need for a privacy alert.

The new phone feature takes advantage of a tool that Google released recently called TensorFlow Lite—an AI software library follow-up to the original TensorFlow. The idea is to allow third party developers to create artificial intelligence applications for Android devices. The new version of the tool, as its name implies, is smaller and easier to use than its predecessor.

The electronic screen detector works by taking control of the front-facing camera and using it to detect faces. The facial imagery is analyzed by a software module that continuously checks to see if more than one face is visible. If so, it puts the phone in video mode and highlights the secondary face with a vomit rainbow spewing from the mouth, ala Snapchat. The screen captions the face with the message "STRANGER is LOOKING ALERT!!!"

Because the software resides on the phone instead of the cloud, processing of imagery can be done very quickly—the developers claim it can spot an interloper in milliseconds.

It is not known yet if the developers will discuss possible privacy

implications of the software or how much of a hit the phone's battery would take if the video camera was on all the time. Also unknown is whether Google is actually considering adding the feature to Android phones or if the [software](#) was developed as a means of grabbing attention for TensorFlow Lite.

**More information:** hElectronic Screen Protector with Efficient and Robust Mobile Vision,  
[nips.cc/Conferences/2017/Schedule?showEvent=9757](https://nips.cc/Conferences/2017/Schedule?showEvent=9757)

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