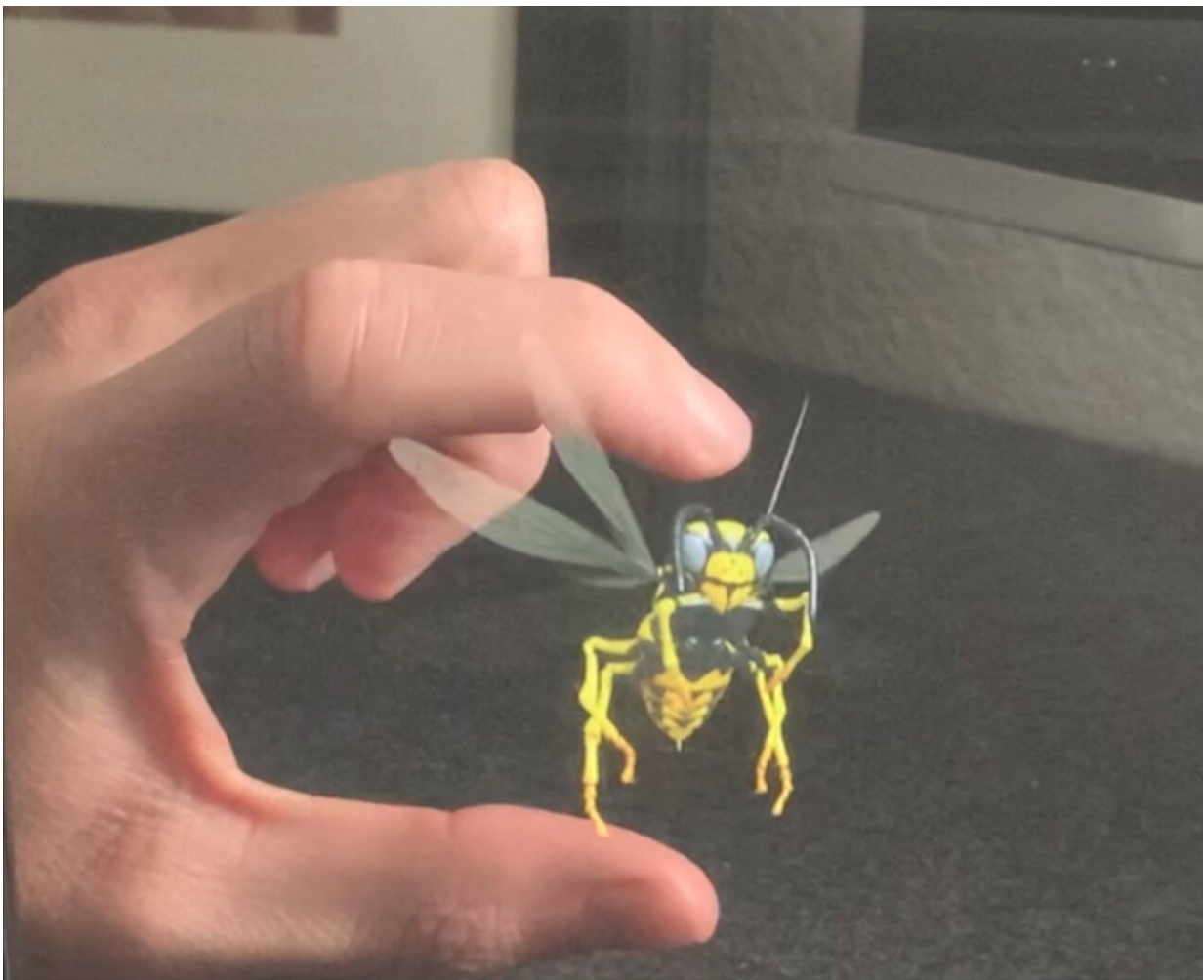


CES 2021: Hologram technology inspired by 'Star Wars' could bring 'new dimension' to smartphones

January 11 2021, by Mike Snider



This demonstration of IKIN's holographic technology shows a buzzing wasp that can be interacted with. Credit: IKIN INC.

The original "Star Wars," a movie later subtitled "A New Hope," inspired generations of filmmakers and other creators.

R2-D2's holographic broadcast of Princess Leia to Obi-Wan Kenobi and Luke Skywalker proved particularly motivating to Taylor Scott.

A scientist who applied for his first patent at age 15, Scott is on a mission to bring holograms—similar to those created by the beloved droid—to the masses.

And the San Diego-based company Scott founded, IKIN, is on the verge of achieving that goal. During the CES show that starts Monday, IKIN will meet with potential sellers and investors about its in-development smartphone accessory that turns content on the device into three-dimensional holograms.

"People for years have thought of holographic communication as sort of idealized magical future and that is actually 2021," said Scott, now 28, who is also IKIN's chief technology officer.

IKIN's accessories create 3-D holograms viewable in daylight from Android or iOS smartphones with a specialized proprietary chemical polymer lens—Scott's first patent involved polymers. Most hologram applications including the concert "performances" of holographic versions of Michael Jackson, Tupac Shakur, and Roy Orbison are done in dark conditions.

When tech exec Joe Ward met Scott in 2017, "he had developed a product which would allow holograms to exist in ambient light with no headgear and no goggles," said Ward, who left his then-current job to found IKIN with Scott that year.

The two discussed creating a projection system that would improve on current approaches, he says. But a platform that would allow [software developers](#) to make use of the IKIN's technology was "really appealing to me," Ward said.

IKIN will create holographic content itself—it has already developed games along with tech demos—but the expectation is that developers of smartphone apps will license the technology. Consumers will buy the accessory, an attachment designed to match the smartphone's dimensions, so it "literally becomes a secondary portal into a dimensional world," Scott said.

For instance, you could explore your smartphone photo gallery, similar to how you peruse an art gallery. Select an image and it expands into 3-D and can be manipulated (you can spin and expand it).

That interaction could be used in games, too, letting your hand serve as a controller. Videoconference calls and meetings could have real-world depth. "It has a lot of applications outside gaming," Ward said. "Multiscreen functionality, interaction with social media, we're really going to leverage that whole ecosystem."

IKIN is targeting a smartphone accessory consumer launch for later this year. The product, its trademarked name is "RYZ," has onboard artificial intelligence that customizes the experience for each user—and the environment it's used in. "If you tend to use a device a certain way, you lean, or are right or left-handed it renders the hologram to look best for you," Scott said.

When he saw a demonstration of IKIN's holographic smartphone technology, the clarity surprised James Brehm, founder and analyst for the internet of things research and consulting firm James Brehm & Associates.

The consumer applications are "a no-brainer," he said. But there are plenty of business applications including 3-D maps at hotels, casinos and amusement parks. Distribution centers could more easily find products or proper places to store them.

He expects interest from smartphone makers and wireless carriers. "Carriers need 5G applications," Brehm said. "This gives them something really cool to build on."

Just as the Apple iPhone was "a paradigm shift" from earlier cell phones, IKIN's technology "takes interactive and explodes it to a new dimension."

The company is already developing bigger holographic applications with larger imaging. IKIN, which has raised more than \$13 million, is seeking strategic partnerships to raise at least another \$10 million.

"This is the first iteration of a brand new form of technology. Not only that but it's delivering on that conceptual promise of (the hologram of) Princess Leia," Scott said. "As far as emotionally engaging in human experiences on the mobile phone, this is the quantum leap that brings us to that futuristic idea that we have dreamed of for years."

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Citation: CES 2021: Hologram technology inspired by 'Star Wars' could bring 'new dimension' to smartphones (2021, January 11) retrieved 20 April 2024 from <https://techxplore.com/news/2021-01-ces-hologram-technology-star-wars.html>

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