

# Television's next big thing: Smell-O-Vision (again)

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Now that 3D television has failed to take off the way designers were hoping, companies have moved on to a newer, better, greater, bound-for-failure idea: Smell-O-Vision.

Haruka Matsukura and a team from the Tokyo University of Agriculture and Technology have designed an olfactory display system that can work in conjunction with a 2D display.

The [system](#) [1] works by utilizing four fans located on the four corners of the screen, which create an airflow aimed towards the viewer and make it seem as though the smell is coming from the screen instead of the fans. It also allows for certain smells to appear to be coming from a certain part of the screen. For example, if someone is making dinner,

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but theystove is located to the right of the focus, the smell will appear to be coming from the right side of the viewer.

The odors themselves are created using vaporizing air pellets, which currently can only pump one scent at a time, though there are future plans to use multiple cartridges to create different scents.

It's not difficult to see that this isn't going to happen. I appreciate the attempt to make television and movies more interactive and more of an experience, but not all smells are good. If you're watching a cooking show, then that would be fine, but what if you're watching CSI or, worse, Game of Thrones. Then what do you get to smell? Dead bodies and really bad hygiene? Pass.

This isn't the first attempt at making smell-o-vision happen. The actual first attempt happened in 1906 when a theater used cotton soaked in rose oil in front of fan to make viewers feel like they were actually *at* the Rose Parade. Disney was the next to consider the idea for the 1940 movie *Fantasia* and then General Electric took a shot in the 1950s. None of these ideas ever really took off for cost reasons or lack of interest.

I hope the same goes for this one.

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### Links:

[1] <http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/23428445>