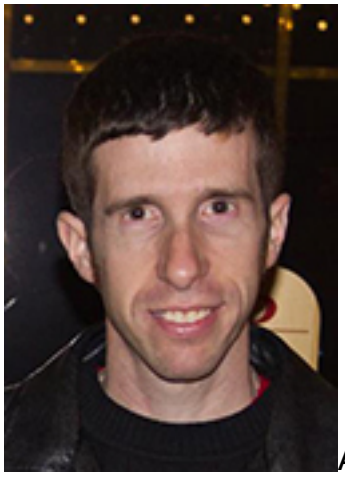
This women’s makeup can launch drones

Jason Lomberg, Technical Editor

 At long last – this red-blooded American male might finally wear makeup. And no, this isn’t an “admission” of sorts. But the ability to control electronics with metallized false eyelashes and conducting eyeshadow could simplify my life *and* improve my fashion sense.

Katia Vega, a computer scientist at the Pontifical Catholic University in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, has developed “beauty technology” – including metallized false eyelashes and conducting eyeshadow that, according to New Scientist [1], complete a very low voltage circuit when she blinks.

The key is to replicate the micro-interactions possible with wearable technology like Google Glass. If nothing else, Vega’s “beauty technology” is far more aesthetically-pleasing (i.e., not a putrid eyesore).

"Blinking is sensed via the conductive eyeshadow and the information can be sent to a circuit inside a headband, perhaps activating something via an infrared beam," Vega said.

"We use voluntary movements to amplify intentions – using our body as a new input device,” she said.

Voluntary movements are key – the average person blinks [2] 15-20 times per minute, and this could foster chaos. But the system only responds to voluntary blinks that last longer than half a second.

At the Interactive Tabletops and Surfaces conference at the University of St Andrews, UK, Vega used her high-tech beauty supplies to light up LEDs worn on her head and launch a miniature drone.

And while this unique piece of wearable tech would ostensibly compete with Google Glass, the search engine giant was impressed.

"This is a clever use of materials and, more importantly, it highlights how today's beauty products could be re-purposed to create computational interfaces," said Thad Starner, Google's technical lead for Glass and a researcher in wearable computers from the Georgia Institute of Technology.”

"I need to find an oscilloscope, an electrolysis bath ... and a Sally Beauty Supply," he said.

Vega is also exploring other wearable technology applications – like false fingernails sporting hidden RFID tags. While no deals are in place, Vega is supposedly in negotiations with several cosmetic companies.

I’ve never worn lipstick in my life, but if they create a shade of red that can start my car remotely, I’m all in.

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[1] http://www.newscientist.com/article/dn24412-metallic-makeup-lets-you-launch-drones-with-a-wink.html#.Ul6lcG0a67a
[2] http://www.ask.com/question/how-many-times-do-you-blink-in-a-minute