

Google to sell prototype of futuristic glasses

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Google is making prototypes of its futuristic, Internet-connected glasses available for people to test out.

The company is selling the device, known as Project Glass, for \$1,500 to people attending its annual conference in San Francisco for computer programmers. It will ship early next year and won't be available for sale outside the three-day conference, Google I/O, which started Wednesday.

"This is new technology and we really want you to shape it," Google co-founder Sergey Brin told about 6,000 attendees. "We want to get it out into the hands of passionate people as soon as possible."

Brin told reporters that Google intends to sell the glasses for significantly less once the product is released to the mass market. He said Google hopes to start selling the device to consumers in early 2014.

"I think we are definitely pushing the limits," Brin said during a question-and-answer session with reporters. "That is our job: to push edges of technology into the future."

With the glasses, directions to your destination or a text message from a friend can appear literally before your eyes. You can converse with friends in a video chat, take a photo or even buy a few things online as you walk around.

In development for more than two years, the project is the brainchild of Google X, the online search leader's secret facility that spawned the self-driving car and could one day let people ride elevators into space.

Isabelle Olsson, an engineer on the Glass project, said the company created the glasses for people to interact with the virtual world without distracting them from the physical world. It's designed to interact closely with your senses, without blocking them.

She said Google had two broad goals in mind: communications through images and quick access to information. The device has a camera to capture fleeting moments and allow others to see the world through your eyes.

Google demonstrated the device by having parachutists jump out of a blimp hovering about 7,000 feet above San Francisco. The audience got live video feeds from their glasses as they descended to land on the roof of the Moscone Center, the location of the conference.

Google had given a glimpse of the technology in a video posted earlier this year.

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