Google to sell Internet glasses to contest winners

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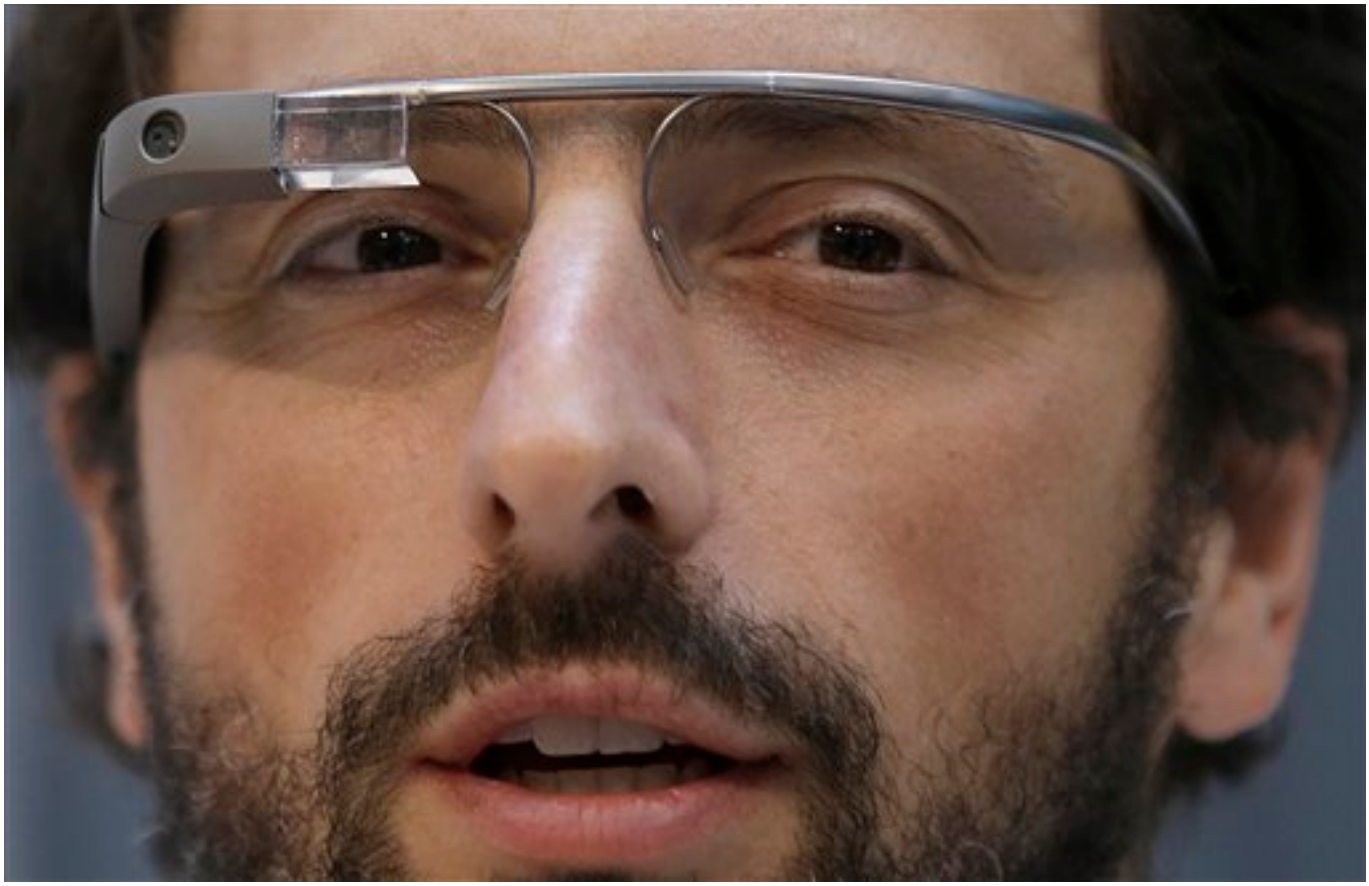

Google is giving more people a chance to pay $1,500 for a pair of the Internet-connected glasses that the company is touting as the next breakthrough in mobile computing.

The product, dubbed "Google Glass," will be offered to "bold, creative individuals" selected as part of a contest announced Wednesday. Participants must live in the U.S. and submit an application of up to 50 words explaining what they would do with the Google Glass technology. Entries must include the hash tag "ifihadglass" and be submitted through Google Plus or Twitter by next Wednesday. Google did not say how many glasses it will sell this way.

Winners will receive the "Explorer" version of Google Glass, a forerunner of the product that is expected to be released to the mass market next year. Google Inc. already sold an unspecified number of the glasses to computer programmers who also paid $1,500 apiece at a company conference last June.

The people picked to buy this next batch of glasses will be notified in mid- to late March. They will have to travel to New York, Los Angeles or the San Francisco Bay area to pick them up.

Google Glass is supposed to perform many of the same tasks as smartphones,

except the spectacles respond to voice commands instead of fingers touching a display screen. The glasses include a tiny display screen attached to a rim above the right eye and run on Google's Android operating system for mobile devices.

Because no hands are required to operate them, Google Glass is supposed to make it easier for people to take pictures or record video wherever they might be or whatever they might be doing. Online searches also can be more easily conducted by just telling Google Glass to look up a specific piece of information. Google's Android system already has a voice search function on smartphones and tablet computers.

In the latest demonstration of the product's potential, Google posted a video showing people wearing the glasses while skydiving, riding a rollercoaster, skiing, riding a horse and even swinging on a trapeze. The company, which is based in Mountain View, Calif., also posted photos of the glasses in five different colors: charcoal, tangerine, shale, cotton and sky blue.

To gauge how people might use its glasses, Google is encouraging entrants in its contest to include up to five photos and 15 seconds of video with their applications. The company doesn't want to see any nudity or violence. "Basically, don't add anything you wouldn't be OK with your Mom seeing," Google advised.

Google Glass is at the forefront of a new wave of technology known as "wearable computing."

When he demonstrated the glasses at last June's company conference, Google co-founder Sergey Brin acknowledged the company was still working out bugs and trying to figure out how to extend the product's battery life. Brin has been overseeing the work on Google Glass, which the company first began developing in 2010 as part of a secretive company division now known as Google X.

Now that Google Glass is no longer a secret, Brin is often seen wearing the product in public. He sported a pair of the glasses during a Wednesday appearance at an event announcing the creation of a $3 million annual prize for outstanding achievements in medicine and biology. Brin, who owns Google stock currently worth nearly $20 billion, is helping to fund the annual awards.

Brin has said the mass-market version of Google Glass will cost less than $1,500, but more than a smartphone.

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