

Google patent pulls personal data up from the crowd.



At the SXSW ubertech conference in 2014, Robert Scoble said the big news about wearable technology isn't what it allows you to do (capture video via glasses or monitor health stats on your wrist) but rather the data it captures about you. Wearable tech is filled with sensors that watch what you do, where you go, and what you like. Google Glass, for instance, has a gyroscope, accelerometer, magnetic field detector, light sensor, location sensors, touchpad, camera/video input, sound input, and sensor tracking your eye movements so you can wink to take a picture. Privacy advocates freak out over what large data companies could do with all of this information, since your hand motions, heartbeats and eye movements can signal, for instance, whether you are lying.

But what happens when all that new data helps companies monitor groups in a room?

Google has received a patent that would upload preference data from mobile devices to allow environments to personalize the media played for crowds in a given venue. The patent, titled sexily "Collaborative Rejection of Media for Physical Establishments," would pull wireless signals from a group of people in a setting, such as a film

screening, concert theater, or disco, and use either direct input from individuals or the history of user preferences to modify the media presented. If a group of country music fans from Tennessee walk into a New York City bar, the tunes could flip automatically to Blake Shelton and Dierks Bentley. While the obvious use would be to customize music playlists in stores, restaurants or bars, this system could also tap the collective preferences of the group in a facility to tailor video content, ad messaging, even film plot lines.

And not all votes would count. The most intriguing aspect of the Google patent is it recognizes that not all customers are created equal. In one scenario, "a customer having the premium status is afforded superior media file rejection." If you're walking next to an affluent businesswoman at an airport, a digital screen could size up both of you and flip to the ad message she is interested in, if she had greater financial value to the company pushing the message.

It's an elegant concept, because it solves the problem of personalization in public spaces. When 20 people are in a room, it's hard to know what [CONTINUED](#) ➔

image to push onto a screen or over the audio. If 3,000 people are at a concert, it's cumbersome to interrupt them all to ask for feedback on the music set list. Now, Google can sort the media via monitoring signals from mobile gadgets (perhaps eye dilation or heart rhythms in the near future) to please the statistically most relevant people in the audience. And because all of this will be based on an invisible signal from all of your pockets, the implementation would not be as freaky as

a large-screen ad retargeting only you, so consumers will be unlikely to rebel. Cheers, mobile-device carriers. Soon at the bar, marketers will know all of your names.

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