

eContact Final Presentation

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This is a summary of the concepts I am presenting in my program eContact, which uses eye tracking in video chat to indicate when each person is making visual contact with the other's face.

What's so special about eye contact?

- Without eye contact people feel that they are not fully in communication
- There is more eye contact when the subject is listening than when he is speaking
- Eye contact can have a variety of subjective meanings - such as friendship, sexual attraction, hate and a struggle for dominance.

Source: Argyle, Dean: "Eye-Contact, Distance and Affiliation." Sociometry, Volume 28, Issue 3 (Sep 1965), 289-304.

"The union and interaction of individuals is based upon mutual glances. This is perhaps the most direct and purest reciprocity which exists anywhere."

- Georg Simmel

How does it work?

- Face recognition algorithm is used to detect a face in the video window
- Eye tracking is used to detect user's gaze and proximity to face region
- When chat partner's gaze is absent from your face, they appear dim on your screen
- A white outline on your chat window indicates that you are transmitting eye to face contact to them
- Time-delay is implemented to allow for natural breaks in eye contact. After 10 seconds alterations to the window become much more apparent.

Who is it for?

- Video chat provides an extra level of intimacy that casual users don't actually want
- Many families do want that level of intimacy, especially parents seeing children who are far away
- The largest percentage increase in Internet use since 2005 has been in the 70-to-75 age group -Pew Internet and American Life Project