Demo: A Social Wearable that Affords Vulnerability

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ABSTRACT

We present 'True Colors': a social wearable prototype designed to augment co-located social interaction of players in a LARP (live action role play). We designed it to enable the emergence of rich social dynamics between wearers and non-wearers. True Colors is Y-shaped, worn around the upper body, and has front and back interfaces to distinguish between actions taken by the wearer (front), and actions taken by others (back). To design True Colors, we followed a Research-through-Design approach, used experiential qualities and social affordances to guide our process, and co-designed with LARP designers. 13 True Colors wearables were deployed in a 3-day LARP event, attended by 109 people. From all the functionalities and interactivity the device afforded, players gravitated towards ones that emphasized the social value of experiencing vulnerability as a prompt to get together. This project was recently presented in CHI '19 [1] and may offer useful insights to others in the Ubi-Comp/ISWC community who develop technology to support co-located social experience.

CCS CONCEPTS

• **Human-centered computing → HCI theory, concepts and models**.

KEYWORDS

Social wearables; wearables; RtD; LARP; co-located social play; embodied interaction; social touch.

1 INTRODUCTION

True Colors is a social wearable, i.e. a wearable that augments co-located social interaction [6]. Our main goal in this project was to design a device that enhanced social interaction and enabled the emergence of rich social dynamics between wearers and non-wearers. To this end, the front interface was designed to empower the wearer to initiate action, while the back was designed for others to use. We were inspired by prior work on technology co-creation with expert design communities [5, 6]. LARP (live action role play) designers are experts in designing narrative and environments that support rich social experience for their players by utilizing technological and non-technological objects [7, 9]. We created True Colors by using a Research-through-Design (RtD) approach [3, 10, 11] and co-creation [8] with Event Horizon (EH)'s LARP designers of New Gyr LARP [4]. A video introduction of the project can be accessed here: https://youtu.be/BBAlV4MCY04.

2 DEMO SESSION AT UBICOMP/ISWC

We will bring two True Colors prototypes with us. One will stay near our demo booth at all times (either on a mannequin or on the presenter). We will use it to explain and demo our True Colors design to visitors, who will be able to see and touch it. The other device will be available for participants to try on and interact with. We will invite those who are willing to try to do so with somebody else, and will show them its functionalities, and how they can interact with each other's wearable. This type of experience will last about 5
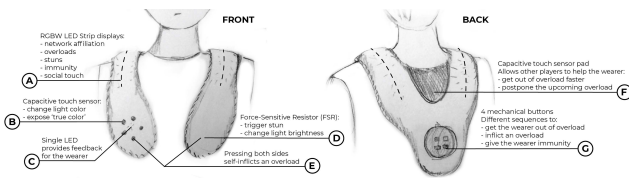
Figure 1: Final design illustration.©Ella Dagan. Video description of the wearable: https://youtu.be/BBAlV4MCY04

Figure 2: True Colors wearable displaying in-game 'Overload' state.©Event Horizon.

minutes. By demoing, and having attendees experience it, we can start a discussion with experts in multiple relevant disciplines, grounded in their embodied experience, about potential uses of a social wearable like True Colors, outside the realm of games/play. The UbiComp/ISWC conference is the perfect venue to open this conversation.

To create an efficient flow of people through the demo to avoid queues, our booth will have one True Colors on display, printed demo submissions, a video played on a loop on a tablet/laptop that we will bring with us, and leaflets with key design aspects. The explanation about True Colors at the booth will not take more than 2 minutes. If too many people crowd our demo at the same time, they will likely hear the explanation, observe others using the wearables, or perhaps watch the video playing on a loop. Attendees who would be interested in trying out the demo while the booth is busy would be invited to come later for a more hands-on experience.

3 PRESENTATION HISTORY

- True Colors was demoed at the Exploratorium After Dark Event in San Francisco. https://tinyurl.com/y25tyglf
- True Colors was demoed during a workshop at DIS '19 https://dis2019.com/accepted-workshops/
- True Colors design was the focus of a CHI '19 paper [1]. Deployment photos on Event Horizon's social media: https://tinyurl.com/y4x2vmsz.
- True Colors design was included as one of two design examples in DIS '19 paper [2].

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