

Controlling the computer with eye movements

Spain – Irisbond

SUMMARY OF PROJECT

Irisbond supports people with physical disabilities and speech difficulties based on eye movement and machine vision technology that enables computer control by sight. Irisbond saw a need to make the product accessible to as many people as possible and consequently created a reliable, easy-to-use, and affordable technology. It is not only used by patients with amyotrophic lateral sclerosis (ALS) but also other diseases that limit maximum mobility, such as multiple sclerosis, cerebral palsy, or muscular dystrophy.

QUOTE:

“Communication is not a skill, it’s a right. Let my eyes speak!”

- Mr. Eduardo Jauregui, CEO, Irisbond

FACTS & FIGURES

- Product sales grew eight-fold from 2013 (€ 12,000) to 2014 (€ 99,000).
- The number of users grew nearly ten-fold from 6 (2013) to 57 (2014).
- The number of potential users worldwide is very high, including people with ALS, multiple sclerosis, paralysis, brain damage, spinal cord injury, etc.

PROBLEMS TARGETED:

The idea first arose in 2000 when a man who was looking for an alternative way to communicate with his wife. As he could not find any such technology available in Spain, he decided to get in touch with Vicomtech. The centre then initiated a new area of research and development in an effort to control a computer through human vision. Once the development was complete in 2013, Eduardo Jauregui founded Irisbond to bring the solution to market.

SOLUTION & METHODOLOGY

Irisbond Primma is a system whereby a simple and intuitive interface allows users to access any Windows computer application accurately through eye movement. With just the use of their eyes, those who are disabled and have slurred speech (as affected by ALS, multiple sclerosis, paralysis, or brain damage) can access the usual functions of a computer, such as surfing the Internet, writing texts, sending an email, etc. They can also listen to music, develop messages that can be displayed

directly on the screen, print them or listen to them by synthesized or digitized voice, watch a movie, and more. Working together with psychologists and speech therapists is vital for the inclusion of those affected during childhood in the educational system and, as adults, for their inclusion in the labour market.

OUTLOOK & TRANSFERABILITY

Irisbond has developed a platform that allows the company to install devices remotely and provide technical support anywhere in the world. In addition, new language versions can be easily added to the software (both Primma and SmartPlaphoons), which allows the company to operate globally. Irisbond believes that the current business model has to be scaled-up to make this technology available to people all over the world. The company is currently transitioning from indirect distribution to a direct sales model, based on online sales. This effort will be supported and driven by prescription from patient associations and medical staff. Such a model will allow Irisbond to be in close contact with users and to adapt the product based on their feedback. In countries with complicated import procedures, Irisbond will secure the support of a local organization working with people with disabilities and will enlist a local commercial agent to distribute the product.

Photo: Yes

Life story: Yes

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