



SPEC-TACULAR:
CATHIE IS A
CONVERTED GLASS
WEARER. INSET:
THAT PHOTO OF
CATHIE'S HUSBAND
AND CHILDREN.



Through the looking

GLASS

They're the smartest specs ever, but how does Google Glass actually work? Business Chicks Premium member **Cathie Reid** gets her geek on ...

I've always been a tech geek at heart, so you can imagine my excitement when I received a Google Glass invitation to be one of their Explorers – a select group who gets to try one of their first models. What exactly is this high-tech headset? Well, it's worn like a pair of glasses and with a prism over your right eye. It has two basic functions: it can deliver information to you using either voice commands or touch, and it can take pictures or short videos that can be transmitted to other applications. Think of it like a hands-free smartphone.

People are often sceptical about the value of Glass until they try it for the first time. 'This is awesome!' is the most common response when someone experiences it. I'm now five months into being a Glass Explorer and use it every day. It is incredibly lightweight and non-distracting – the screen display quickly turns off when you're not interacting with

it. I often forget I'm wearing it, until I catch someone giving me odd looks!

The privacy concerns reported by media regarding its recordings are quickly disproved once someone has experienced Glass for themselves. There is nothing subtle about wearing it, and there is no chance I could be surreptitiously recording without being seen. In addition, the battery life chews up rapidly when video recording, further reducing any viability for covert activities!

Given that I'm not walking around recording people's actions and conversations, what am I actually doing with Glass? When I'm in the office, it provides an easy way to stay up-to-date with social media and breaking news. We are also working on how wearable tech can be utilised within our business, so I'm often involved in meetings and demonstrations around this.

Helpfully, Glass also delivers real-time calendar information, alerting me when I

need to leave for my next appointment based on current traffic, even advising an alternate route if my usual one is experiencing greater than normal congestion.

But it's when I'm travelling that Glass really becomes invaluable. Maintaining my fitness regime while I'm away is so much easier using LynxFit via Glass, which provides an eye-line workout, complete with video demos, counts the number of reps of each exercise and gives an intensity rating at the end. The GPS functionality delivers information about places of interest nearby, with turn-by-turn directions and the ability to call from Glass to make a reservation if required. Being able to take photos without having to hunt through my bag to find my phone is also great, and Glass can even translate a sign in a foreign language for me just by looking at it!

The only criticism I have is around the voice-to-text functionality, which can be interesting. I first experienced the perils of this on Australia Day, when I took a lovely photo of my husband Stuart and the kids and sent it to Facebook with the cheery caption 'Happy Australia Day.' But unfortunately, Google's translation of my Australian accent actually saw the photo captioned 'Hope you all die!'

In the same way that every new piece of technology rapidly evolves from its first physical iteration, I'm sure that early versions of Glass will ultimately become just as amusing as the first brick-sized mobile phone is today. What I am equally confident in is that this type of tech is here to stay.

While arguments will no doubt continue that you can do everything you do with Glass with a smartphone – and this may well be true at a social or personal level – what makes Glass a game changer is its ability to provide hands-free, line-of-sight information delivery and capture in a workplace setting.

At my pharmaceutical company APHS we're not only interested in its application in the acute healthcare environment (there are many great videos on YouTube clearly illustrating how Glass can transform the future delivery of healthcare), we're also really excited about the role it can play in other areas such as inventory management.

I absolutely love being part of the Glass Explorer program, and can't wait for its mainstream release. In the meantime, if our paths cross, I always love an opportunity to demo Glass – so don't hesitate to ask! ❖

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