

Transcript

R: Yeah, I wish I could tell people what's going to happen in mine

D: Well, that's the whole point isn't it, that you don't know?

R: It's not possible to say, it's not like you're going to paste your first reference. I do have some concerns about being recorded

D: Do you?

R: I hate the sound of my own voice but that's not my problem, that's yours

D: I promise I won't play it back to you; instead, I have to sit and transcribe it... which is in some ways worse because it means I have to listen to my voice

R: How candid can I be here?

D: Extremely candid

R: Good

D: I am after your honest opinion

R: Occupation... what the hell do I write?

D: Student

R: Oh it's recording?

D: Yeah, Phd student

R: Yeah I know, I just wanted to be clever about it... Disillusioned slacker!

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[Unrelated chat]

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[Reads instructions]

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P1

D: So before we start, there is a couple of questions to begin with... So really, I'd like to start by getting your general thoughts on hand holding; do you miss it while you're apart; do you think you'd like some kind of system which represented hand holding in some form to use while you're apart...

R: Which question am I answering?

D: Both

R: Do I miss it?

D: Do you miss holding hands with Caitlin while you are apart?

R: It's not the first thing which comes to mind about what I miss but yeah, I suppose

D: Yeah? What is the first thing that comes to mind?

R: [giggles] Well I couldn't say that on a recording!

D: OK

R: no, I'm joking... it would be spending time together, sitting on the bed together, things like that, watching 24 while caressing her in my arms

D: Just being close to each other and being able to touch each other?

R: Yeah

D: Ok... do you think you'd find value in some system which tried to, not necessarily hand holding, but something touch based

R: Might depend on what the functionality was and what it looked and felt like

D: Ok

R: If it felt weird, if it felt cold, then I might be inclined to not use it

D: Yeah?

R: It would be weird I think, like touching a dead person

D: So, that's cool, time for the first scenario

R: [reads scenario - yourglove]

R: OK

P1

D: OK... so before I ask you the first questions, please fill in this score for the system in the scenario

D: Again, based on the scenario and the system described in it, I have some questions for you. First off, what are your first thoughts about it, if you have any?

R: The scenario or the system?

D: Both

R: I thought the scenario was nice; it made me smile... but that be because of the writing, it was like a little story and I liked it [laughs] but yeah, the system sounds good, it doesn't sound creepy, that's for sure

D: Ok, so, it didn't sound creepy and you kind of liked it... what was it about it you liked

R: Ummm.... I don't know it seemed sweet really but then it had that word there...

D: Was it just the idea of having some system to do hand holding together

R: I don't know, if they were talking on skype and they were talking about something personal, it might increase the intimacy of the moment say, if they were into it together

D: Yeah, OK... was there anything about it you disliked? Or were unhappy about?

R: Not really, no not really

D: Ok, so final question before you get to use it; do you think this is something you might use in your own relationship?

R: Maybe; but it would take some convincing I think?

D: Why is that?

R: I think if I turned up with any kind of contraption she'd be a bit... I don't know what the word is... hesitant

D: What if it was more like fully finished, in a swanky box, type product; something you'd bought

R: Maybe yeah, might depend on if it was seen as a quirky item or if it'd been accepted by a wider audience... you know what people are like, when they see something for the first time they say "why would you want to do that" and then after a while it's fashionable but it could go that way I suppose

D: OK, that's hopeful

P1

[bring prototype out]

D: [shows

R: Can I hold it down?

D: Lie it down?

R: Yeah... although it seems a bit gentlemanly.

D: I'm now going to

R: is it going to do something?

D: Yeah, it's going to hold your hand. Ready?

R: Yeah

[buzzing]

R: [laughs]

[releases]

R: [laughs] feels just like Caitlin

D: Good. Would you like to try it in a different position

[tries it down]

D: Do you find that more comfortable

R: It's a bit jerky

[stands it up]

R: Didn't make any difference... it's not the way we would actually hold hands... The way we'd normally hold hands in the street would be like this [demonstrates hands being down] so it's a difficult position to get it [the yourglove] in that position. In between there... I don't want it to snap my hand.... It's difficult to get my fingers in there, the hands aren't soft... [the palm to palm hold] I can't get my fingers in the gaps, it would be better if they were softer

[vertical]

R: [giggles] It's quite funny

D: So you've obviously read the scenario and this is a way of realising that concept. We have some more questions. Having now used the prototype, have any of your opinions from the scenario changed?

R: Well, it's only a prototype so I won't get carried away but... I mean, what do you want me to reflect on, the functionality or the way it feels or just...

D: The way it feels, the way it looks, whether you think it's creepy or not

R: No, I don't think it's creepy... well it's only a prototype so it's a bit jerky which doesn't feel very natural and the hands are made of whatever they are made of so that certainly doesn't feel like any hand I've ever touched but I think it would be funny to play with

D: Do you think it would be better if they did feel like a real hand?

R: Yeah, if they were soft if you imagine a glove somehow but not rubbery but just soft, almost like a well made glove

D: Or like a foam ball, not too touch but the squidginess

R: It could be that... practically it could be that. I was thinking more, yeah, foam ball might be right, might be a bit hard, something you can actually have a bit of give, you can get your hand in properly and hold it but I think that even if it did look like that, the important thing is knowing that the other person was controlling it, more than what it actually looks like

D: What about how it feels?

R: What do you mean like feel?

D: The actual touch of it, do you think that's less important than knowing it's the other person...

R: No, it's still important it feels like a prototype, which it is, which is fair enough, but if it was more natural, if it clasped a bit more naturally and less like [gnah – makes clenching sign] then it would be fine and just the way it feels, if it wasn't hard

D: Ok, so was there anything you thought you would like which you now dislike or the other way round, anything you thought you would dislike which you liked or did it meet your expectations?

R: The sound was offputting

D: Too loud?

R: Yeah, it's mechanical so you get like [buzzes] so it sounds weird... so that was offputting but I realise it's only a prototype

P1

D: Do you think that would disturb...

R: Yeah, in a finished system I think it would interrupt the moment, it's like something dodgy happening in the bedroom at the worst possible time, it goes to clench and goes [bzzzzz] as it does it, it would be odd

D: sure, so you'd change that, you'd make it quiet

R: Yeah, nothing to disturb the moment I'd say

D: Is there anything else you'd change?

R: The speed perhaps, prototype again, but it wasn't natural, and the feel like I said before wasn't natural

D: So by speed do you mean the quickness and slowness or that the fingers all moved together?

R: Could be both.. .what I was getting at originally was that it just sort of jerked into place and it wasn't a smooth progression, it didn't feel like a hand, it's shaped like one but doesn't feel like one, but now that you say it, I don't know how I would hold someone's hand, maybe if it was more natural it would help. I don't know if the little finger would go in first but maybe...

D: How significant do you think that is compared against

R: The way it feels? The way it feels is more important

D: OK and in an order of priority, the knowledge that it was the other person is top...

R: Yeah but that's a different thing, it would always be that person so with regards to the way it actually feels

D: That's actually more important than the movement

R: The feel of it and actually being able to get my fingers in the gaps would be more important than it closing all at the same time or not all at the same time

D: So, the device is, the way we've described the device to you is quite personalised, it's your partner's glove, it's covered in clothing they are fond of, do you think your opinion would change if it was a standard glove and a random top? Do you think that would change your perception of the device?

R: It'd difficult to say without that actually happening but I suspect it may do

D: For the better or for the worse?

P1

R: I don't know, if it was like a tracksuit top which wasn't something she would wear, then yeah, it would be for the worse I suppose

D: Because

R: Why it would be chavvy... generic I guess

D: you wouldn't associate it with her

R: yeah

D: The way the device is meant to work at the moment is there's a switch hidden in the back and the idea is when you press this one, Caitlin's would close... what do you think of that as an activation method

R: I think it would be better in the palm

D: Because that's

R: My instinct to hold it would be in the palm, not like this [demonstrates] And even if it was like this with the fingers in the fingers, how would I reach it? With my tiny fingers, I can't reach it, I'd have to go like this which is totally unnatural

D: So that's a pragmatic, what about the idea of you making her's go

R: How would it work exactly?

D: What do you mean?

R: Well if I go to hold it, and I press the switch, would that make this one close as well as hers?

D: No, just hers

R: Right... Would it be better, if there was some kind of dual method

D: So if you were both pressing them

R: I suppose that would be difficult because if I put my hand in it, hers would close and her hand might not be in it

D: Sure sure

R: What I meant is that if I put my hand in this one now, this one closes automatically and so does the other one... but her hand might not be in it. As if when you go to take your partner's hand in real

P1

life, you go to grab it and they automatically close t... but then because you're separated by distance and presumably can't see each other, if I do that and hers closes, her hand might not be in it

D: So what about something where you both had to be holding it and once you were both holding it, both gloves would close

R: Yeah that's a little unnatural I suppose, if there was some way to speed that up then that would be good, maybe. I suppose when you put your hand in like a handshake, you can touch that button, perhaps if it was near the knuckle on the index finger it would be easier to use... but then again I'm using it like a handshake so if I was going to be intimate, and be walking down the street I'd go more like this [demonstrates] and I can't, I'm really struggling to remember how we hold hands and it's bugging me! Quite bad really. It'd be something like this [shows]. Again, I can't actually reach the button. Although you said about doing it this way, that's not how I would hold hands normally, feels like a high five.

R: I don't know how you'd solve that really, it's almost like you'd need a webcam but you'd have to say put your hand in there now, I'm going to press

[scales]

R: I put it high on sociability because I think it would be fun if it actually was this... I think it would be a laugh messing around with it

D: So more fun than intimate? Something to play with

R: Possibly yeah.... Just because at the moment it goes [bzzzz] it feels like a toy, something you'd laugh about if you got it for Christmas.

[scenario 2 – hothands]

R: Sounds fun again

[rating scales]

R: Shame there's no 'fun'

D: What are your first thoughts about the system? You mentioned fun again...

R: Yeah... it was a bit weird when he says "lets make models of our hands", sounds like it could be someone's strange closet fantasy which comes out after 6 months... but then it sounds like fun again when he's says they've got a kit, that could be fun, even if it might be a bit weird

D: The process of making it?



P1

R: Yeah, that could be fun, the process of making it could be fun, you could do it together, although making a model of any body part is a bit weird in my book! [giggles] But there we go, this is for a purpose, but yeah...

D: So you say it would be fun...

R: it would be fun yeah, but the relationships between making the model hand and then it warming up is odd, although it's called hothands, it would be inanimate but warm which would be weird...

D: Do you think that the fact that they went through this process, you'd attach more value to it than if you just bought a dummy hand and it warmed up

R: yeah... probably, because it's a cast of the other person body part, not a thing made of tubing like the other one was... but this one doesn't seem to move which makes it more like an object than a tool... toy? I didn't want to say toy because it's not intended to be a toy but it was fun, so I kind of see it like that

D: So more ornamental...

R: That's a good word for it; it looks ornamental although I wouldn't want an ornament of someone's hand

D: Do you think this is something you might use?

R: It depends, I don't know, I think I'd enjoy the process of making it but not of touching it

D: Sure

R: If it was cold again, cause this looks like what I said before I wouldn't like, cause it looks creepy

D: You think this looks creepier than the other...

R: Yeah I do

D: You don't like the creepiness, is there anything else you don't like about it? You said

R: It looks odd at the moment because it's not painted, if it were painted, I think it would be fun... if it looked like, I don't know, in the scenario it say's she's going to paint it his favourite colour, but I was doing it, I'd probably paint hers and get her to paint mine or possibly the other way round, paint something rude on it, for fun

D: You would personalise your partner's one?

R: I suppose you could personalise your own and then gift it to them but I think id rather personalise theres so that they remember me when im not there

P1

D: You personalise the cast of your hand and give it to her so she would be reminded of you because you'd personalised it?

R: Yeah I think so... because she's going to have the cast of my hand

D: You said there seemed to be some kind of disjoint between making the model and then just throwing some heating stuff no it... do you think that's a bit weird then?

R: Not weird, I just didn't see the connection between having the model and then it heating up really... but that doesn't mean it would be bad, you'd just have to try it I suppose

D: You get that it's meant to be similar to the other one that you only warms up when your partner's hand is in there's

R: Oh, OK, I didn't get that... So if I touch it...

D: Hers would warm up

R: Ah, I see... so it's like my hand is on hers then... yeah I could see that then

D: So that's just not clear from the scenarios then?

R: Not really...

R: If I put my hand on this one, would this one heat up?

D: no

R: the other one would heat up? Ah I see. That would be weird, but then...

D: Again, as they put their hand on there's to feel the heat, yours would warm up

R: again there's a disjoint between what the real action is

D: So again you think if you put your hand on it both should warm up

R: possible, but the thing is, if it warms up automatically, I don't get any satisfaction from knowing that they've touched it... but if it doesn't warm up then it feels cold which is weird

D: ok

R: Again its like a disjoint between the real action and what you're trying to achieve

[use system]

P1

[wants device facing him]

R: It looks like it came from a tomb in ancient Egypt [giggles]

R: Yeah, you might touch it like that, rest your hand on it

[warms it up]

D: If you just rest your hand on it...

R: I'm just not sure how hot it is... it's not heating all the way through cause it's just a prototype so it's a bit odd

D: So you'd like the whole hand to be warming up

R: Yeah the bit im touching

[turns it around]

R: It feels a bit warm, I just think im extremely cautious, it's like touching a hot radiator...

R: It depends, I can see myself using this if I was on webcam, say, so Id be looking at them so my model would be for the hand to be facing me

D: So it matches her body

R: Yeah so if you were sat opposite me, I would imagine this hand to be the other way round as if we were sitting facing each other in real life... because it wouldn't match the action wed be doing if we were actually there

D: you think that would cause

R: I think it should match... the mental model I suppose

D: OK...

R: If it were all over, it doesn't actually feel that cold or clammy which is interesting, I though it was going to be a lot colder...

D: So its more comfortable than you were expecting?

R: yeah it is yeah, holding it like this is anyway, the other way round is more awkward... it's growing on me this prototype [laughs]... Yeah it is awkward... maybe if the grasp was flatter

P1

D: Facing you, you thought was more uncomfortable but better than it facing away which breaks your mental model but which you find physically more comfortable

R: No... well yeah, you're right, but only because the way the hand is shaped at the moment, so it feels more comfortable to sit like that, it feels like a mouse... and if I turn it to face me which is the way I'd expect it to be in real life, it feels more uncomfortable but if it was flat, it would be more... I think if I was making a cast of my hand, that's how I would do it

D: And then you'd just rest your hand...

R: You might even be able to slip your fingers in

D: More like a usb cup-warmer and you just slide your hand on top

R: Yeah more like that

D: OK, anything about it you would change, other than the way of casting it and spreading the heat out...

R: No, we've already covered those two things...

D: So, in the scenario we gave you, the couple cast their hands together, if I told you this was just a random hand that had been cast, and everyone would get the same, would that change your perception of the system?

R: I think it would take the fun out of making it

D: Sure, so it would be less fun

R: Yeah, I think it would take part of the fun out

D: Do you think that would carry over into the use of the thing

R: Yeah because you might not like the position it's in if it was generic... Part of it is getting it into a shape which feels comfortable

D: We've still not pinned down the activation method...

R: Well it seems like an interesting design problem

D: Do you think that would change on an individual level; like do you think Caitlin would like it activate differently to you?

R: I have no idea – I simply couldn't say

P1

D: Because you yourself seemed to have several different thoughts...

R: In terms of what happens when I touch it/

D: Yeah

R: I don't know, there are just some issues that need to be thought about there.. When I touch it, do I get satisfaction from knowing that they might be touching it... what if they don't touch it, I might be disappointed... so if I touch it and theirs warms up, the only way I know if they got it is if mine warms up... which is good but then if I don't get anything, then it doesn't feel natural, it doesn't replicate the action

D: What about if neither of them warmed up until both your hands were on them?

R: That would probably be better I think

[scale]

[final scenario – hot mits]

[scale]

D: Based on the scenario again, first thoughts?

R: About what exactly?

D: The system, the process, the concept, take your pick

R: I don't know, it seems similar to the others, its got the same thing I said the last one should have, its got the hands flat, but it wont match what I said, I cant put my hand in it the right way round

D: Is there anything about the concept you like or are your thoughts the same as they were before

R: They are similar to they were before but I've been turned on to the idea of it warming up so I don't find it so odd now

D: What about the look of it... because you expected the last one to be cold and clammy, thought it looked a bit creepy...

R: No, I don't expect that now so much

D: Because you've experienced the other one or because this is visually different

P1

R: Bit of both actually, I know the materials, the material looked like it was going to be really cold but it isn't and it looks like its made from the same material and this one has colour so it doesn't look so "dead" so that helps

D: Is there anything you particularly dislike?

R: Pliable in terms of use... I could only put my hand in it in that position and no other, I couldn't change it at any point in the future, I couldn't do anything else with it. Looks bulky as well, looks like it would take up a lot of space for what it does. It looks like a biometric scanner more than an intimate device I would say. I could tell it isn't going to heat up all over but that's only the prototype so that's fine

D: In reality, you'd expect the entire thing to warm up

R: Yeah

D: OK... do you think this one is something you might use

R: No, not compared to the other two, because this is too bulky although I don't know, but on the face of it...

[use the device]

R: I just feel tentative about it... maybe that's something, like you cant predict, you don't know how hot its going to be I suppose... this ones not very hot, just feels like a warm spot. It would need to be warm all over for it to be enjoyable... but it would need to be my partners hand, although again this isn't how you hold hands so its odd in that respect

D: Lets go back to what you said about it warming up, and you not being able to predict. Do you think that's an issue compared to the movement based one

R: Maybe in like a final product, it could be possible to control the temperature you want it to come on at maybe, because people have different thresholds. If there was a little knob maybe,

D: Do you think that would help

R: Maybe because it would give you some control over it, maybe the other person could control it even, that would be interesting, get them to burn you... it just feels odd because its only in the centre of my palm and that isn't... and it wouldn't be warm like that... that comes on like a radiator comes on whereas your partners hand is just not cold... whereas that's just like a spike of heat... I suppose you couldn't make it immediate because if its based on when you put your hand in it, you cant predict when its going to be warm

D: You could keep it warm

P1

R: You could but then you'd lose the thing of it getting warm when they put their hand in it

R: It could be more all over but less hot; it feels like artificial heat rather than natural heat which is different

D: So you mentioned that its not a cast of your partners hand... do you think that would make a difference?

R: yeah... well know actually because this is odd, imagine if my hands were really big and my girlfriends hands are tiny, that still works in real life, but here it's like your putting your hand into a mould of a hand that's not yours so it wouldn't fit. So like that finger there doesn't feel comfortable because it's not resting in there. So even though it sounds odd, it might be better to have a cast of your own hand

D: Do you think that would work better?

R: It would work better in terms of comfort... yeah because if it was my girlfriends hand and it was that big then first of all it would feel really uncomfortable to put it in like that and its not the way we would hold hands anyway... so if it was an imprint of your own hand it would be more comfortable, ergonomically

D: do you think you'd lose some of the personal meaning because it wasn't your partner's hand? Or do you think the making the model together and painting...

R: Yeah, there's no reason you couldn't do it on your own if you were doing your own hand... maybe if you got them to paint it... but one thing that's quite interesting is I don't want to take my hand out, its quite comfortable just sitting here

D: Its slightly more comfortable than you thought?

R: yeah, it doesn't feel weird

[scale]

R: So that's the weird thing, it felt like a good fit but it wasn't a good fit but it was because my hand fitted in it so oddly it felt more personal that it fits well even though it isn't my hand

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D: Which of these is your favourite and why? Which of these did you like the best?

R: I liked different aspects of all of them and I disliked different aspects of them... if I had to pick a winner I would go with the first one [yourglove].

D: What if you could sort of cheery pick the bits you like then, what would that look like?

P1

R: I don't think it would be possible because for example I like the fact that I can fit my palm into that one [hotmitts] but suspect they'd be pragmatic issues, then the second one [hothands] was more realistic but not pliable... if your hands in one position its in that position its forever. This one [yourglove] was more fun but it was more artificial because it sounded like a robot or a toy but it was also more fun because of that because it had some action and you could play with it.

D: What do you think about the overall goal of trying to support hand holding at a distance? Do you think you'd use it is a different way of phrasing the question...

R: It would depend, there would need to be some agreement between me and my partner that it would be used and it would depend on the price, me being tight, and its difficult to say, you need to see a final product, but I might use it, yeah... it would take up a lot of room

D: So conceptually yes, but a lot of pragmatic things would come into play

R: I think that's fair, yeah

D: How well do you think these start moving towards that goal

R: Quite well but you could take some ideas from people to make other prototypes...

D: I mentioned at the start, hand holding was just one thing we were interested in, were there other things you missed more, do you think those other things could be supported in a similar way to what we've tried here with hand holding?

R: Not really... but if there were it might take the value out of them when they were real...

D: The fact that you cant hold hands while you're apart makes you value it more when you're together?

R: Yeah, it makes you value your time more

D: These systems are all essentially content free... do you think there's value in that?

R: yeah I think so...

R: [STORY]

There was a time when I was going out with someone in Spain and we were on second life, we found this thing which made the avatars hug, like a script. And when we used it it was nice, it was like ever so slighty intimate that we managed to make these stupid avatars do that... like you had to position them up for ages to be able to get them to do it... so that was good, it was like replicating an action in the virtual environment and it does sound like that but at the time it was quite nice, it could work if you do something similar.



D: Do you like this one [yourglove] because it's perhaps the most literal interpretation of hand holding? Do you think that has a bearing on how much you like it because you said these aren't very natural

R: Maybe, I just thought this one I could envisage, having more fun with it so not so much make me feel close to my partner but I can imagine it would be more fun to play with and it would suit our relationship more because we can be playful sometimes... but it could be creepy if it was buzzing and stuff but that could be funny.

D: Do you think there's a line to be drawn; do you think this would be really creepy if it was too much like a hand?

R: Maybe but I did say if it had a good quality glove that was comfortable to hold so it doesn't need to be creepy, it just depends on how it was implemented. If it was a cold, clammy rubbery hand, then yeah, that would be horrible.