

Transcript

[first scenario - YourGlove]

D: So as a starting question, what are your first thoughts?

T: An interesting idea... I think it's a nice idea that it reacts by sort of one person acting upon it in a way rather than it just being a system being you put your hand in it, it closes automatically, it's good that it's like in a way controlled by the other person...

D: Are there any things that you dislike about the idea?

T: I suppose it's difficult to judge it until you've tried something like it but it might be a reasonably surreal feeling... I just can't decide actually rather whether it would be something quite nice or something that's actually a bit odd... that's my only concern really, that you could find it a bit strange and also again with that judging how like strong the hand is because if it's quite strong it's not really a sensitive hand holding more like a restraining grip!

[prototype]

[used as palm to palm]

[used from behind]

D: obviously you weren't sure what to expect from the scenario; what do you think now that you've used it?

T: I think it's... [technical discussion]

T: I mean the other thing was it doesn't really feel like a hand; that was my first thought when...

D: in terms of

T: Well actually in terms of just like the feel... that's obviously down to the fact that it's a prototype, cause obviously that I'm guessing could be developed to feel more hand like... especially when going from [behind] it's a bit odd at that point [points at knuckles] because they're more prominently sticking out... but that again is just down to it being in this current phase as it is now... otherwise I thought it was quite good

D: What about the movement?

T: That I thought was quite good because like it wasn't really rapid and it wasn't particularly violent or anything like that but on the other hand it wasn't sort of like, you were waiting forever for it to grip your hand... I thought that was quite good... so like from the mechanics of it, it was quite good, it was more down to the feel of it that I had issues with really [laughs]

D: in the scenario we describe it as something that you get of the shelf, you order it off amazon – do you think your thinking would change if the way we described it was more like a kit, so you buy the device and then you and your partner pick the gloves, or you use your favourite gloves, maybe a bracelet, use an old top that you're fond of...

T: Yeah I see, like customise it so it's more like your partner... I suppose that would definitely make it much more personal device so like then you would look at it; then on the other hand that could be quite creepy in a way; like sort of just the arm of your partner in your room... but ummm... I suppose that would make it more personal, the fact that it's dressed like them, rather than some arbitrary dress sense... but I think that's all down to personal preference; some people might find that a bit strange and actually they might find that a bit emotional in a way, especially if like being in an LDR, if you see things that remind you of your partner, that could be quite hard so if you saw this arm which isn't just a link to your partner but actually looks sort of like your partner that could trigger, upset you a bit emotionally... I probably would go for the customising it to make it more like my girlfriends arm rather than having it...

[second scenario – HotMit]

D: So again, first thoughts on this one?

T: Ummm... is it a flexible device, it's just a flat...

D: it's just a flat...

T: My thought with that is it's not so much holding hands in a way, its sort of just resting your hand on it, so it's different in concept, that [yourglove] was more a hand holding concept, whereas this is more just a, in a way, a drinks cooler, like the opposite effect of that for your hand, just something to keep your hand warm... maybe that seems a bit less personal, its nice again that it's controlled by your partner, but... on the other hand it's sort of, you could just be sat there thinking oh this is warming my hand up rather than thinking im sitting there holding my partners hand...

[prototype]

D: so is it pretty much what you were expecting?

T: yeah it's almost exactly what I was expecting

D: What would you change about it do you think?

T: I think sort of from my point of view with hand holding, it would need to be a bit more dynamic, so in a way a combination of that and the previous one [yourglove] is sort of the dynamic capability of the previous one, so the fact that in grabbed your hand, but then in a way the warmth factor of that to give that move sort of life rather than just sort of robotic grabber, it would actually feel like you were holding a persons hand because of the fact that it would be warmer than the ambient temperature...

D: So that active thing is quite important?

T: I think the active thing is sort of from a hand holding perspective I think personally, that's what I sort of prefer, the more active approach but then I do like the fact that its got the temperature aspect of it so that it does feel like you are actually feel like you are holding a hand because it's keeping you warmer and stuff...

D: Again, we packaged it as being a standardised imprint... again we've been thinking of it as a kit where you cast your hands together... and then can decorate them however you choose...

T: That would be much better than that because that as it is at the moment seems reasonably impersonal, its kind of jusdt like you are putting your hand on an arbitrary hand pattern which is warming your hand up whereas if it was your partner's hand shape it would feel a bit more like you were holding hands, well with your partner rather than sort of just any sort of stranger...

[third scenatio – HotHand]

D: What do you think about this one?

T: I think sort of my thoughts are reasonably similar to the previous one [hotmits], the idea of it just being a heater... is this one sort of flexible or is it solid? Again it's kind of similar to the previous one was like resting your hand on someone's else hand whereas this one is like having your hand is being rested on in a way sort of like cast like that... it would be interesting to see what it's like when it's working just because I think it would be quite, even though it's the same sort of idea of the heating by contact thing, it would be interesting to see how it is rather than just one sort of underside of your hand but something which is surrounding your hand in a way...

D: What do you think about it visually?

T: Again, like the big hand on the moving hand, it could be slightly creepy... but again sort of its just taking what I've seen from here if you actually see it, it might be a different approach...

[prototype]

[discussion of where the heat is]

D: So have your thoughts changed at all?

T: If it was... in a way if it was adjustable so you could move it [the heat] around that would be quite nice because then it would make it more down to the user how they want to take the hand holding approach... and again it's similar to just the heating idea but I think it's nicer because you are not just sat flat, you are actually more personally, a grip there...

D: On the preious point then, maybe if we warmed the whole hand...

T: Yeah... how you want it...

D: What about visually?

T: I mean if it were as is I think that would be quite sort of strange... just because it's a white hand that looks like it's fallen off a manikin or something like that... just on your desk... again if like the first example, if you could customise it with different gloves and stuff, that could be... or paint it so sort of have your own personal approach to it...

D: Playing on that personal approach thing, what if it was cast of your partners hand?

T: I think that would definitely be a lot better I think because then provided that it sort of felt human like in a way it would feel like you were holding your partners hand which I think from that sort of perspective that would be the best of the three because you feel like you're holding hands with your partner then although in a way you're not getting any kind of feedback in a way, it's not reacting to the fact that you're holding their hand but it's your partners hand in a way so its more familiar so that in a way might be nicer so it depends if you prefer the reactivity so it feels like you're having your hand held as well or that you prefer it feels like your partners hand and then sort of...

[wrap up]

D: We've talked a bit about the way it's activated and it being nice because it's an active connection to your partner... the way they are technically configured is like a one-way link, you put your hand in and then the other persons reacts... one of the other thoughts we've had is maybe both peoples hands need to be in before anything happens... do you have any thoughts or preferences either way?

T: I suppose the whole thing with the reaction thing is definitely the best way to go because the whole point is about being responsive, the issue if it then causes arguments if one person's finding it a bit creepy and then the other person is gripping on for dear life thinking nothing is happening, the other person's is not doing anything at the other end... I think the idea of it reacting with both of you reacting is a good idea because it means then that at least you know your partner's doing it but you are both getting the feedback, we're both in this together in a way... I think that could work quite well...

D: Do you think you might use any of these? Not necessarily as they are here but as concepts?

T: not entirely sure I would but that's just down to the fact that my LDR will not be LD for much longer, only another year and a half, so I think for a year and a half I could get by without some sort of device like this but I think that, for example if these had been available at the start of my uni life, knowing I had 5 years of long distance then I possibly would have considered one...

D: Do you have a particular favourite of the three?

T: I don't know if I have a favourite but the one I would be least likely to go with would be [hotmits], the reason I don't have a particular favourite out of the other two is the benefits of one of them is the negative of the other on and vice versa, so for example this one [yourglove] is nice because it's dynamic but you don't really feel like you're holding a hand, you feel like something is just grabbing onto you whereas this one [hothands] feels like you are doing the work and the hand isn't really responding to you...

D: Do you use skype?

T: Occasionally yeah

D: With video?

T: yeah

D: So one of the things we've been thinking about is... at the moment the way they are configured both people have to be there at the same time... that obviously doesn't suit every situation or every couple and we've been playing with this idea that somehow you could create almost like a video voicemail and then leave it with one of these devices and you slip your hand it and you feel it and your partners video plays... what do you think of that...

T: I think that's, it is a good idea because as you say then it means you don't have to be there all the time although part of me thinks its slightly impersonal in a way because yes you've recorded the video for them and yes you've triggered the device to respond for them but you're not directly talking to them in a way, I think this sort of device would work better if you were actually in your skype conversation at the time rather than pre-recorded in a way...

D: So you've actually formed that connection

T: You know you're both there making the time for each other to have the conversation and stuff rather than oh hi I tried to call you, you weren't in, have this...

D: So we're obviously looking at holding hands here; is that actually something you miss?

T: yeah...

D: so do you think, with the idea of trying to support it, do you think there is some kind of value in that?

T: I think yeah, if it had been at the start, if this sort of thing had been available at the start I would probably have considered buying one so I definitely think its worthwhile provided you're going to get a usable amount of time and usage out of it... so if you've only got a short amount of time, personally I'm not so sure about it, like if you were only going away for a month or so maybe not,

but if you are starting out and your lives diverge and you don't know when they'll converge, and you don't know when in the short time then that would be better

D: So hand holding is not the only thing we're interested in – are there other things that you miss more while you're apart, things like just being together or hugging?

T: I mean, I do just miss every aspect but I think from a trying to recreate perspective I think hand holding is probably the least strange one from a device, cause I think hugging would be very very strange from a device so I think hand holding is probably the best thing you could do... I think everything else, like how it would be a bit creepy having an arm on your desk, it would be even creepier if you had a whole spread of arms in your room [laughs]