



Thinking Cap: "Mynd" Is the First Dry, iPhone-Compatible, Portable Brain Scanner

BY DAVID ZAX Mon Mar 21, 2011

Neuromarketing goes mobile with this lightweight, dry, and iPhone- or iPad-compatible new device from NeuroFocus. DiY brain researchers rejoice!

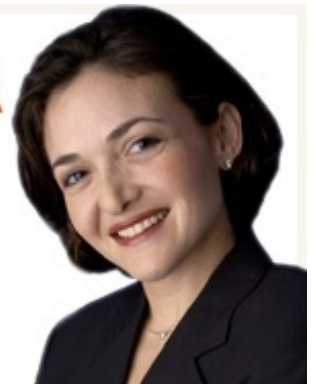


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[NeuroFocus](#), a firm that brings brain research to marketing, today [unveiled](#) what it deems “the first dry, wireless headset designed to capture brainwave activity across the full brain.” The device, three years in the making, debuted at the 75th Annual Advertising Research Foundation conference in New York.

What is “neuromarketing,” the odd corner of marketing research NeuroFocus has staked out for itself? Broadly speaking, neuromarketers measure how the brain and body react to certain stimuli, then extrapolate from that information whether an advertisement, brand, product, or package is having its desired effect. Neuromarketers [reportedly had a hand](#) in the 2010 midterm elections, with several [consulting](#) for Republican candidates. Neurological research has also been used to help market movies. Recently, *Fast Company* also [explored](#) whether these firms might have a hand in making the movies themselves.

NeuroFocus’s new device, which it calls “Mynd,” has a few key features. It claims to get “full-brain coverage with dense-array EEG” sensors, yielding data “within seconds” of switching the device on. It can also network with any Bluetooth-enabled mobile device, like an iPhone or iPad. Unlike other EEG devices you may be familiar with, Mynd doesn’t need to use gel (that’s what’s meant by calling the device “dry”). And since the device isn’t too heavy itself, and can be linked to a wireless device, that basically makes it a mobile brain scanner. (See our earlier take on a “wearable” PET scanner for rats, [here](#).) NeuroFocus envisions research panels conducted at home with the device; its CEO [Dr. A.K. Pradeep](#) tells *Fast Company* those might happen within the next eight months.

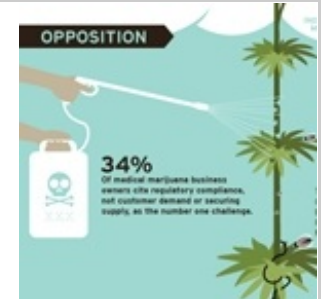


The Mynd device is enough of an advance that medical brain researchers are taking an interest in it. The European Tools for Brain-Computer Interaction Consortium, or [TOBI](#), will use Mynd as its “core platform” to develop technology

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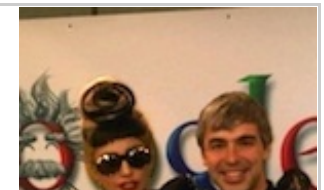
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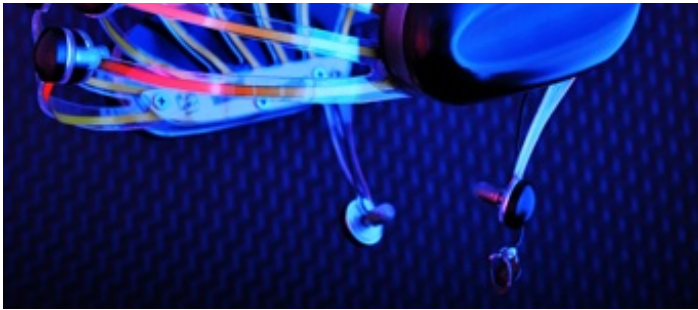
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that could help people with neurological disabilities; NeuroFocus says it's donating several devices to the consortium. NeuroFocus advisor and UC Berkeley professor [Dr. Robert Knight](#) helped facilitate the contact at TOBI, which is led in part by

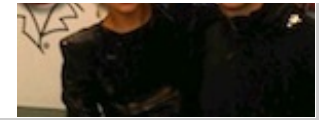
Professor [José del R. Millán](#), a researcher at the Swiss Federal Institute of Technology who has pioneered a number of novel brain-computer interfaces (including one featured in [this slideshow](#) on the new “thoughtpads,” from last fall). In the words of Dr. [Gerwin Schalk](#), a research scientist in neural injury and repair at the Wadsworth Center, a New York State public health laboratory, Mynd’s real innovation is in taking brain research from being bulky and expensive to something potentially lightweight and on-the-fly: “This wireless dry electrode headset substantially reduces the cost and expertise necessary to access signals from the brain, which has profound implications for clinical and commercial applications of EEG technology,” he [said](#) in a statement.

NeuroFocus CEO Dr. A.K. Pradeep tells *Fast Company* he was especially excited to be contributing to science: “I run a marketing company, and I know we’ve taken so much from science. It’s kind of cute and funny to give back to science. The headsets we design are now actually going to be used by people in wheelchairs to control those wheelchairs. It’s really a fascinating moment.”

NeuroFocus is expected to roll out the device in labs all over the world shortly; the device is not for sale commercially however, and Pradeep declines to say how much each one costs.

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[Images: NeuroFocus]



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To the writers at Saturday Night Live: Read this piece!

I wonder...if you have this device on your head connected to your own smartphone, would you get feedback through your brain?

Perhaps some gel would help.

Bud Thompson 03/22/2011 02:17 PM



Per the Simulation Argument (I am the output of program running on future AI's) this could be the apparatus sent back in time to bootstrap the matrix. So really there was not a time when this did not exist. According to the Singularity Argument, we are building the matrix as we go and this is the next step in developing the human thumb drive for a Singularity iPad that has stored all my useful experience. These are all complete fictions of course.

kirk 03/22/2011 12:43 PM



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