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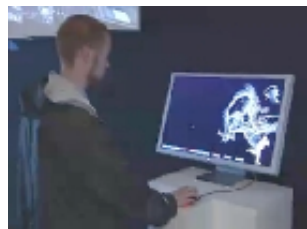
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# Technology



## Parsons School Of Design Students Dream Up Quirky Uses For Technology



June 06, 2005

*In the following report, NY1 Tech Beat Reporter Adam Balkin sorts through an entire room full of bizarre uses of technology to help you decide if any of them might someday end up in your life.*

The Swap-O-Matic is a public vending machine for trading old stuff. For the Virtual Voodoo Doll, stick it with a needle and an on-camera likeness feels the pain.

These are the kinds of interesting, quirky, weird technological innovations you'll find each year at the Parsons Design and Technology Thesis Exhibition.

"The goal of Design and Technology and of students in this program is actually to think about people first and not the technology," says Colleen Macklin of Parsons School of Design.

"They come up with amazing things because they're actually looking at problems in the general world in our daily lives, and they're trying to solve them using design and technology."

A real problem is nightmares. A real solution is the Nightmare Waker-Upper.

"You wear a glove to sleep and it senses from

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Adam





your heartbeat, your sweat on your hands, your body temperature, to determine whether you're having a nightmare, and if you are it will wake you up," says Macklin.

Another invention is neat both because of the gee-whiz factor, but also because it could possibly help people with disabilities - maybe those who can't use their hands or arms - more easily manipulate computers. How it works is, you look down into what looks like a microscope to calibrate it so that you can manipulate a cursor and redraw images using just your eyes.

"These kinds of devices on the market are incredibly expensive, and she's created a really cheap design solution," says Macklin.

Tag is also apparently big with Parsons students. "Hit Me!" is exactly that - you score a point by smacking the button on top of the other person's head. The button also snaps a camera in the headset, taking a picture of you smacking your friend.

"Every day we're dependent on technology, sending emails or instant messaging, but it's not quite the same as seeing somebody face to face or interacting with somebody," says Kaho Abe, one of the students who created "Hit Me!" "So this game is just a way of promoting that through technology."

Or if you really want to hurt your friend, Taser Tag delivers an electric shock to his head the closer you get. But you get shocked, too. This one can't be safe.

"The working hypothesis is people will forgo their own safety to inflict pain upon others, and from what I've found out, from experience, it turns out to be true," says Randy Sarafan, a Parsons student. "People will continue to risk their own safety to continue hurting other people, and that's pretty scary."

Almost as scary as developing a game like this in the first place.

- Adam Balkin

## Balkin

[Adam Balkin](#) covers the technology beat for NY1 News. He is the champion of NY1's "Hat Trick" hockey video arcade game.



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