Haptic Edge Display for Mobile Tactile Interaction

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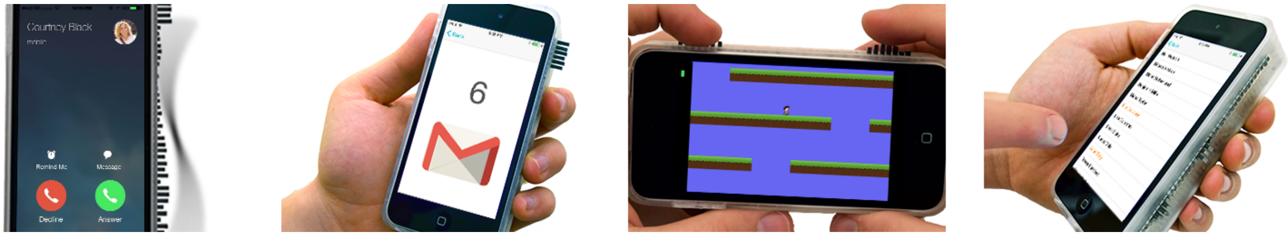

Figure 1: Haptic Edge Displays enable novel input and output techniques for mobile devices. Left to right: Dynamic affordances to easily answer incoming call; Haptic notifications for unread messages; Gaming; Interaction techniques

ABSTRACT

Current mobile devices do not leverage the rich haptic channel of information that our hands can sense, and instead focus mostly on touch based graphical interfaces. Our goal is to enrich the user experience of these devices through bidirectional haptic and tactile interactions (display and control) around the edge of hand-held devices in a user's dominant or non-dominant hand. We propose a novel type of haptic interface, a Haptic Edge Display, consisting of actuated pins on the side of a display, to form a linear array of tactile pixels (taxels). These taxels are implemented using small piezoelectric actuators, which can be made cheaply and have ideal characteristics for mobile devices. We developed two prototype Haptic Edge Displays, one with 24 actuated pins (3.75mm in pitch) and a second with 40 pins (2.5mm in pitch). This paper describes several novel haptic interactions for the Haptic Edge Display that suggest new haptic experiences for dynamic physical affordances, haptic display, and also in-pocket "pull" style haptic notifications. In a laboratory experiment we investigated the limits of human perception for Haptic Edge Displays, measuring the just-noticeable difference for pin width and height changes for both in-hand and simulated in-pocket conditions.

Author Keywords

Mobile Haptics, Tactile Display, Dynamic Affordance

ACM Classification Keywords

Interaction Using Specific Capabilities or Modalities

INTRODUCTION

Current mobile devices allow users to choose from millions of different applications. However, all of these different applications have the same limited means of interaction: touch on a graphical interface. The haptic channel and complex dexterity of the human hand are ignored by these devices, which have severely limited interaction bandwidth. In addition while the dominant hand is used for touch, the non-dominant hand remains under utilized.

Commercial haptic interfaces for mobile devices have been introduced to address some of these issues. These systems provide haptic feedback primarily through global or localized vibro-tactile means [30, 28]. We believe that there is a richer set of mobile haptic interfaces that can move far beyond the current state of the art to enable new interactions and experiences that leverage the rich tactile sensing and output capabilities of the human hand.

We propose a new approach to mobile haptics: Haptic Edge Display, a miniature tactile shape display[21] around the edge of a traditional mobile device, which can allow for both haptic feedback as well as expressive input utilizing the dominant or non-dominant hand. Recent research in Shape Displays has explored rendering 3D geometry and user interface elements[11], which can maintain their shape without constant actuation. This allows for passive haptic exploration on the part of the user, in addition to active haptic output found in many current haptic interfaces. The Haptic Edge Display can work alone as a display for haptic notification or with a graphical user interface to augment interaction and provide haptic feedback.

We explore the design space of Haptic Edge Displays through a prototyping process, as well as the implementation of two functional mobile devices with different resolutions and speeds. Our first mobile prototype had 24 actuators spaced 3.5 mm apart with a travel of 15 mm. In our testing and exploration of this device we found the need for a higher resolution display. The high-resolution prototyped Haptic Edge Display

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has a linear array of 40 actuators, with a pitch of 2.5 mm and travel of 0-7 mm. We leverage off-the-shelf miniature piezo linear actuators, similar to those made by New Scale Technologies and Piezo Motor. Piezo actuators have many advantages that make them an ideal choice for use as tactile display in mobile interfaces: low energy consumption, long life, low cost, back-driveability, and high refresh rates. Integrated capacitive touch sensors allow for expressive input.

The Haptic Edge Display can be used for a variety of application scenarios to provide: Dynamic Affordances (buttons and controls), "push" and "pull" haptic notifications both in-hand and in-pocket, interpersonal communication, and expressive haptic output for gaming. In order to further explore the design space of Haptic Edge Displays, we chose to investigate the ideal resolution for such a display. To do so, we conducted two psychophyscial experiments to find the lateral and depth finger perception for both in-pocket and out-of-pocket scenarios.

This paper offers four core contributions:

- A novel type of haptic interface for mobile devices utilizing an array of linear actuators protruding from the bezel of the display.
- Two prototype implementations of Haptic Edge Displays.
- Software applications which demonstrate possible applications for UI control, tactile display, and notifications.
- A psychophysical study to measure ideal resolutions for haptic edge displays.

RELATED WORK

Commercial mobile haptic interfaces have primarily relied on vibro-tactile feedback, primarily for notification, touch confirmation, and gaming [23, 6]. Research has explored combining touch interaction on a graphical touch screen interfaces with haptic feedback to simulate different button presses, using small piezo actuators [30, 29]. In addition, pneumatic actuation has been explored as a means to directly create dynamic buttons directly on a touch screen [16]. Commercially, Tactus systems creates touch screens from which physical buttons emerge, using hydraulically filled transparent wells [9]. More recently, researchers have used electrostatic vibration to render different friction forces on a finger when interacting with a mobile touch screen for haptic exploration of interface elements as well as gaming [2, 25]. These interfaces rely on the dominant hand to be touching the screen, which blocks portion of the screen. Different approaches have been used to address this issue either by using the back of the device or with infrared sensors on sides of mobile device [3, 7]. In contrast, our research solves these issues by utilizing Haptic Edge Displaythrough shape change and displacement for both the dominant and non-dominant hand.

Tactile Arrays display dense tactile information through mechanical or electrical means, for example stimulating different parts of a finger tip [4, 34]. Particularly relevant is the Exeter touch array, which uses piezo actuators to move 100 small pins in a 1.5cm square area, to simulate different haptic sensations [33]. Our approach is to apply tactile array technology to mobile devices, tightly coupled with their graphical interfaces, and develop new interactions and haptic display scenarios.

Researchers have explored applying haptic interfaces to the control of more traditional user interface applications, such as media control [32]. Hemmert applied some of this research to the context of mobile devices, creating a haptic button on the side of a mobile device that can display different information to the user when navigating menus [18] while Hoggan investigated the use of multi-actuators for haptic communication [19]. The THMB device created by Pasquero also provides unique cutaneous haptic feedback to the user through multiple cantilevers mounted on a slider on the side of a device [27, 26]. ComTouch investigated the role of haptics in interpersonal communication [8]. Both Holman and Blasko uses pressure sensors for one-handed interaction [5, 20].

Shape-changing mobile devices can also provide haptic feedback that is much deeper than a simple vibration. Even when the mobile is inside a person's pocket, it can convey various information to the user by changing its physical shape [10]. In normal out-of-pocket situations, it can display internal, yet off-screen content through thickness[17] or by angular actuation of either the entire device or just parts of the device [14, 31, 1].

Haptic Edge Displays build on this prior mobile haptic research to allow for novel interactions with haptic and tactile feedback that are intuitive and versatile in different scenarios such as in-pocket or out-of-pocket, or in the dominant or non-dominant hand.

HAPTIC EDGE DISPLAYS

This paper introduces the Haptic Edge Display, a novel approach to haptic interfaces for mobile interaction. A Haptic Edge Display consists of small linear actuators arranged in a linear array around the bezel of a mobile device, see Figure 1. This allows a user to receive rich haptic information while holding a device in their non-dominant hand, by changing the height of each individual tactile pixel (taxel) independently. Patterns and shapes, as well as temporal animations, can be created and felt by the user's hand. The haptic display can easily be combined with graphical interfaces.

Interaction Techniques

Haptic Edge Displays provide a wide variety of rich new haptic experiences that can augment traditional mobile interaction. We suggest three main applications of the Haptic Edge Display: 1) Dynamic affordance for better control (tactile input) such as physical buttons, sliders, and grips. 2) Enriched information representation (haptic output) including haptic awareness for notifications. 3) Novel haptic experiences for gaming.

Haptic Display

Haptic Edge displays can render a physical 1.5D profile shape emerging on the edge of the display.

Haptic Edge Displays can enable the following haptic sensations: Surface Texture, Geometric properties (ie Shape, local

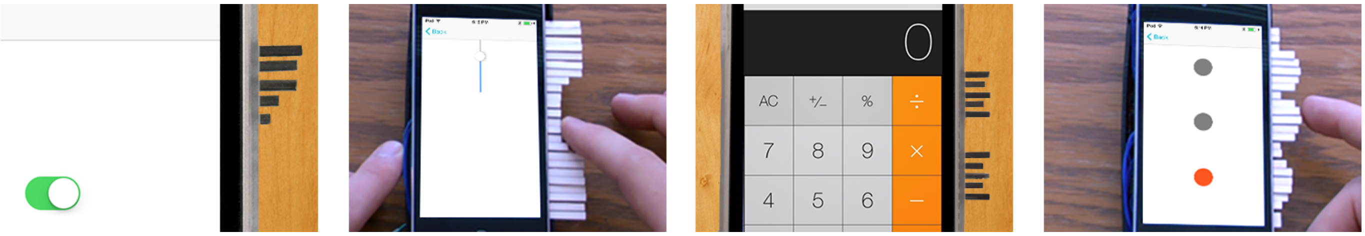


Figure 2: Dynamic Physical Affordances rendered on the Haptic Edge Display *Left to right:* Toggle; Slider; Tabs; Radio Buttons.

curvature), Motion (texture and geometric properties changing over time), Force output and Compliance (Variable stiffness). Haptic Edge Displays primarily rely on Slow-adapting type I (SA I) Merkel cells in the fingers and palm, that sense coarse texture and are used for pattern/form detection as well as the proprioceptive ability to measure displacements in joint angles in each finger. Sensations can be perceived both passively (i.e. statically holding device) and through haptic exploration (i.e. moving hand or finger over device). This is an advantage of the Haptic Edge Display over techniques for haptic rendering, such as electrostatic methods [2] which require movement to generate changes in tactile sensation.

Tactile Input

In addition to the output capabilities of Haptic Edge Displays, they can be used as an input device. Each taxel has an integrated capacitive touch sensor, such that a single taxel can be used as an input device. It is more likely that a group of taxels would act as an input device rather than individual taxels. In addition, taxels are compliant and back-drivable, allowing for deformation based input. This can allow users to create custom shapes by pushing or pulling or allow for rich tactile input.

Dynamic Physical Affordances

Currently, mobile devices have fixed physical affordances, such as buttons for controlling the volume of sound output or returning to the home screen. We envision a future for mobile devices where buttons and other interface elements can change their size, shape and location to fit the different needs of interaction for varying applications. We call these Dynamic Physical Affordances.

Buttons and sliders can be rendered on the edge of the display to map to different functions and dynamically reconfigure to meet the changing needs of an application or changes in application. Bi-stable buttons, such as radio buttons, can be emulated with the Haptic Edge Display. Buttons can also have haptic feedback through vibration and detents.

These Dynamic Physical Affordances can be used to change the affordances for different applications. For example, when a user opens a game, shoulder buttons can be rendered on the Edge Display, allowing for more expressive control, see Figure 1. However, when the user quits the game the buttons disappear. Another example would be for camera control. When a user is in camera mode a physical button could be rendered in the top right corner regardless of the orientation of the device. This button could also have dynamic resistance making it easy to press the button halfway down which could focus the camera and then pushing the full way down to take a picture.

These affordances can be tied to graphical content. For example, a list of contacts can be displayed on the graphical display, and the frequency of their use can be mapped to the Haptic Edge Display, see Figure 1. Thus a contact that is frequently called is easy to find, and pressing in on that taxel would call the contact.

Figure 3: The Haptic Edge Display being used in-pocket for "pull" style haptic notifications.

Haptic Notification

Vibration is currently the most common medium for haptic notification. Although vibration is very useful for drawing peoples attention, it is less useful for ambient or glance-able types of notification. We envision passive haptic notifications that allow users to easily retrieve information when they seek it, not necessarily when it first arrives. For example, imagine a user with their mobile device in their pocket, see Figure 10. The Haptic Edge Display could be used to display the number of unread messages the user received, each message represented by one taxel sticking out. By touching the side of the device the user could easily determine how many unread messages she received. If notifications are time sensitive, more expressive notifications can be created by outputting a dynamic shape such as a sinusoidal wave.

IMPLEMENTATION

Hardware

Initial Low-Fidelity Prototype

To begin our exploration, we created a low-fidelity mobile prototype using commercially available linear servo motors, VS-19 Pico Linear servos, see Figure 4a. The system consists of a Bluetooth LE module, 24 linear actuators, 24 pins


(a) (b)

Figure 4: The internal configuration of two Haptic Edge Displays are shown: (a) original low-fidelity prototype and (b) high-resolution prototype.

with copper tape for capacitive touch sensing, 2 touch sensor boards, 2 servo motor drivers, a microcontroller, and a smartphone, see Figure 5.

The device communicates with the smart phone via Bluetooth LE and commands desired pin positions via PWM signals. Each pin is connected to a capacitive touch sensor board, made by Adafruit, by running copper tape on one side of the pins. By stacking two rows of servo motors with 7.5mm width, the closest pitch we were able to achieve was 3.75mm (refer to Figure 6 for terminology). In addition, due to the bulky packaging of the servo motors, the minimum thickness we could achieve for the first prototype was 36.5mm, which is five times thicker than many available mobile devices such as the iPhone 6 with has a 7.1mm thickness. Due to the friction in the gears of the motors, the first prototype is not back-drivable. It also has maximum speed of just 12mm/s and was fairly noisy during actuation. All 24 servo motors require maximum of 2A at 3.7V for a maximum total power consumption of 7.4W.

From some initial informal testing, we found that people were very interested in interacting with the haptic edge display, but wanted a system that provided higher fidelity interactions. Thus, we quickly realized the need for a higher resolution prototype that was thinner, quieter, faster and back-drivable.

High Resolution Prototype

In comparison to the first prototype, the most significant change is the use of piezoelectric actuators in place of the linear servo motors. The use of these piezo actuators enabled us to drastically reduce not only the pitch of the device but also the overall size of Haptic Edge Display, see Figure 7. In addition, these particular piezo actuators are back-drivable which enabled a larger range of interaction possibilities. Other major differences are listed in Table 1.

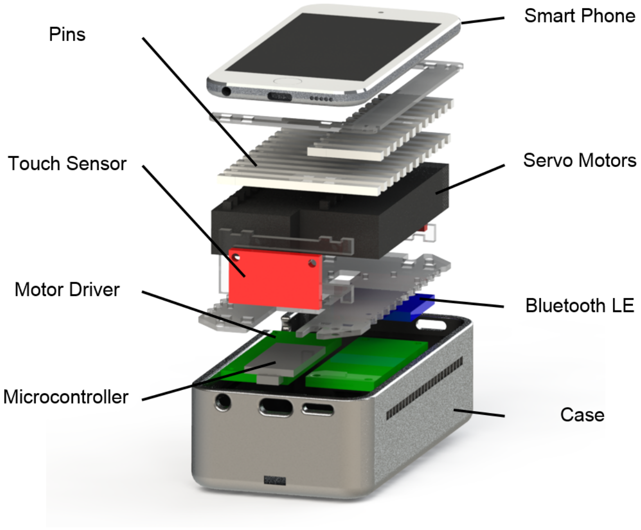


Figure 5: Exploded view of the low-fidelity Haptic Edge Display

	Initial Prototype	High Resolution Prototype
Dimension (mm)	$67.5 \times 130 \times 36.5$	$62 \times 127 \times 24.2$
# of Pins	24	40
Pin Width/Pitch (mm)	3.5 / 3.75	1.6 / 2.5
Pin Thickness (mm)	3	3.125
Travel (mm)	17	7
Max Speed (mm/s)	12	30
Position Sensing	N/A	Linear Pot.
Actuation	Servo Motor	Piezoelectric
Depth Accuracy (mm)	1.06 (16 steps)	0.44 (16 steps)
Output Force (gf)	3.7	3-5
Power Use (W)	7.4 (@ 12mm/s)	10 (@ 20mm/s)
Back-drivability	N/A	Yes
Noise	Loud	Silent

Table 1: Specification comparison between prototypes

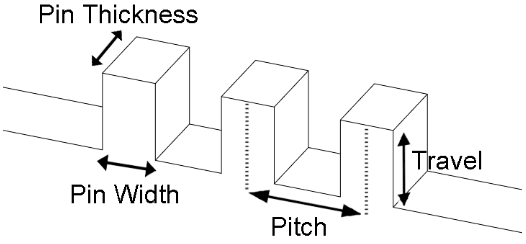


Figure 6: Terminology for the Haptic Edge Display

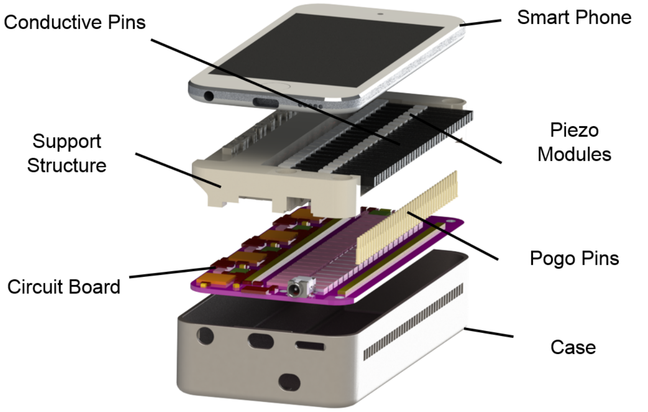


Figure 7: Exploded view of the high resolution Haptic Edge Display

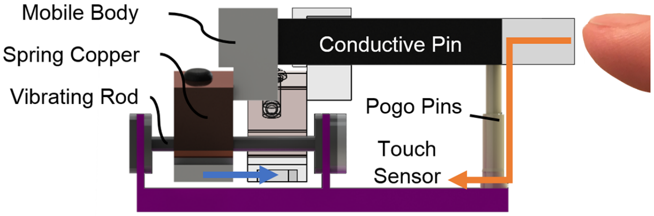


Figure 8: Diagram of the piezoelectric actuator and touch sensing

The piezoeletric actuator, TULA35 from Piezo Electric Technology, Inc, consists of two components as shown in Figure 8: a custom mobile body and a vibrating plate/rod. It operates in a particular frequency range of 65-85 kHz which normal PWM LED drivers are not capable of. By varying the duty cycle the mobile body can move forward or backward relative to the vibrating rod. Empirically, a 25% duty cycle has been shown to provide the best performance moving forward while a 75% duty cycle is best for reverse direction.

In order to minimize the thickness of the device, a custom four-layer PCB board was designed and all the electrical components were mounted on it as shown in Figure 9. The circuits can be broken down into four modules: microcontrollers, Bluetooth LE communication, piezoelectric actuator drivers, and capacitive touch sensing. Position sensing with linear potentiometers has also been demonstrated for a single pin in this design. Four microcontrollers are used for the final prototype with each delivering ten PWM output signals and are connected via an I2C communication bus.

Similar to the first prototype, capacitive touch sensing was used as an input method. However, rather than using copper tape to connect the path, the pin itself is steel, thus conductive, and a pogo pin was used to deliver the touch sensing from the steel pin to the PCB Board as shown in Figure 8.

For each pair of piezoelectric actuators, one piezoelectirc controller chip is used and can consume a maximum of 150 mA at 10 V. Thus, for 40 piezo actuators, a total maximum of 3 A at 10 V, or a maximum power consumption of 30 W, is needed. However, we currently only run 10 actuators concurrently giving a max total power consumption closer to 7.5W. Currently, two power sources are used: 10 V for piezo actuators and 3.7 for the digital circuits.

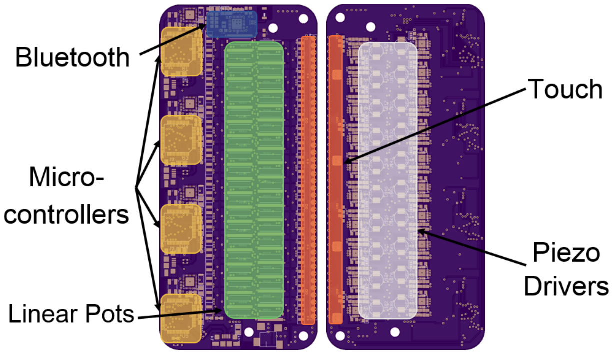


Figure 9: Layout of the circuitry on the custom four-layer PCB board

Software

We separated the software for the edge display into three different subsystems. Two subsystems were written for the Teensy controllers, one for the Teensy controller designated as master and the other for the rest of the Teensy controllers designated as slaves. The third subsystem was written for the mobile device.

Communication between the master controller and the mobile device occurs over Bluetooth LE using the code provided by the Adafruit Bluefruit LE Connect repository. The master and slave controllers communicate over I2C. User input to the Haptic Edge Display is detected by the master controller and forwarded on to the mobile device, while input on the mobile device display is handled locally.

For many applications, a large number of taxels are needed to move simultaneously, but due to power constraints, our system could only power 10 moving taxels. To circumvent this issue, the master controller determines how many taxels need to be moved and if the number exceeded a safe threshold (8 taxels for this prototype), the controller will break the taxels into smaller groups, cycling very quickly between groups to move that set of taxels. Because the cycle time is quick enough, all taxels can appear to moving at the same time, although at a somewhat slower pace.

Applications on the mobile device were able to interact with the edge display by issuing commands to the master controller, specifying a taxel and a desired position. The master controller internally handled the details of moving the taxel to this position. Each taxel was also capacitive touch sensing and any touch information would be transmitted to the mobile device from the master controller.

Limitations

Power Consumption

Our current system uses an inefficient boost converter (this was chosen as already on board the piezo actuator driver chips we used) which increases power consumption. Additionally, while we currently run the actuators using 30V (the ideal voltage for max speed), they can also work at 15V, which increases the efficiency when the voltage is derived from 3.7V batteries. In addition, we do not believe that in daily usage all actuators will be used continuously. Currently at 30V, the system can move one button (consisting of 4 pins) out/in 2500 times with a 500mAh battery.

Thickness

The thicknesses of each actuator and pin are only 3.5mm and 3.125mm, respectively. However, our current design combines this actuator with a spring copper provided from the manufacturer. For this reason, there is a limitation in the design of mobile bodies as in Figure 8. Due to this structural design, the thickness from the top of the PCB board to the top of the conductive pin is 12.2mm. These parts could be modified to sit in series with the actuator, see Figure 11. Considering that the PCB has a 1.6mm thickness which can be 0.8mm and that the case has a 2mm thickness which can be 1mm, we expect that the overall thickness will be reduced down to 18mm which is close to the diameter of a dime.

DEMONSTRATION APPLICATIONS

Gaming

Falling Frenzy

Falling Frenzy is started in landscape mode and the edge display creates shoulder buttons, one on each side of the screen. On the screen, the user is presented with a small character standing on the ground. When the user presses one of the shoulder buttons, the character moves either left or right. A third physical button appears when the character reaches certain contextual areas in the game, where a virtual button appears at the same time.

This game illustrates the benefit of dynamic physical buttons to enhance a mobile game's experience. First, it allows for buttons to be allocated in places that intuitively make sense to control the character's movements. Second, the character's interaction with the red virtual button demonstrates how the physical and the graphical worlds can be combined to create intuitive gameplay that wouldn't be possible with the graphical display alone.

Figure 10: Drawing application

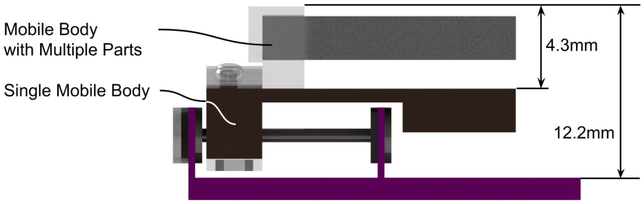


Figure 11: The single mobile body design can reduce the whole thickness down to 18mm.

Snake

Snake is a variant of the 1976 arcade game Blockade which has appeared on many mobile phones. This game is played in portrait mode and the user controls a snake that moves around the screen eating apples and growing larger. The player controls the snake by swiping in the direction of the desired movement. Whenever the snake body approaches the side of the display, taxels on the edge display move outwards to represent the movement of the snake. These physical expressions of the digital world are common in gaming, such as rumble packs found in game controllers, and the edge display provides a more intuitive alternative to simple vibration.

Heartbeat

Haptic Edge Displays can be also used in the context of communication. Touch is an essential part of our communication in person, such as greeting people with a handshake. However current mobile interfaces used for communication rely mostly on audio and video media, ignoring the haptic channel. The Heartbeat application works by showing a beating heart on the screen, while simultaneously creating a dynamic pulsing action on the edge display allowing the user to feel the heartbeat of another person.

We think there are great possibilities in this type of interaction. The Heartbeat application is a translation of a physical heartbeat to a digital reading and back to a physical output via the edge display. This interaction could also take the form of two users virtually linking their haptic edge displays. One user's actions on her edge display could be sent to the second user's edge display essentially transferring the physical touch to the second user.

Contacts

The Contacts application resembles a generic contacts list commonly found on phones. Many contacts lists have a portion of the interface set aside for favorite contacts (or at least a way to easily access them). Instead of using a portion of the screen for this, when important contacts show up on the screen, a button is rendered by the Edge Display next to them. This button can easily be tapped by the user to open up that contact.

Reading

One benefit of physical books over their digital versions is their ability to provide an awareness to the progression ambiently through their physical form. Our Reading application takes steps to providing these benefits by adding a physical indication of progress. As a user scrolls through a passage, the edge display renders a small bump that travels from the top of the display to the bottom. As it passes through the user's fingers it provides awareness to her overall position in the passage.

EVALUATION

In order to determine the necessary parameters of an ideal Haptic Edge Display, we performed two psychophysical experiments to find the lateral and depth haptic resolution of humans' fingers, a compound effect from the tactile spatial acuity and joint proprioception. We wanted to investigate how well such a device could function both in-hand and in-pocket, the latter of which is especially relevant for haptic notifications. To look at the worst case scenario we compared an in-hand condition with a simulated in-pocket condition with stiff denim fabric. The in-pocket condition was is simulated to find the Just Noticeable Difference (JND) of lateral and depth finger pad perception (which corresponds to the pitch and travel resolution, respectively) and compared to the normal in-hand control condition.

Our initial hypothesis was that both the lateral and depth haptic resolution would be lower for in-pocket situation. However, we also hypothesized that the in-pocket haptic resolution would still be high enough to be able to perceive meaningful shapes and/or expressive tactile notifications through fabric.

Background

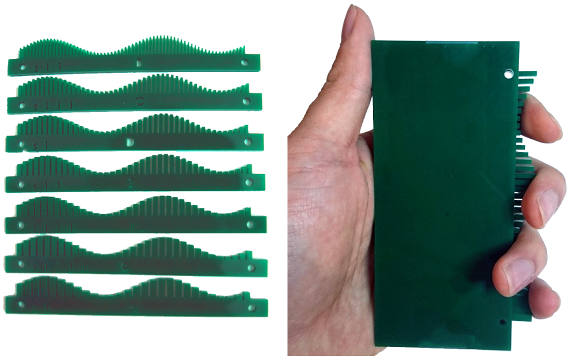
Though there has been much research in psychology and neuroscience to measure the limits of human haptic perception, these studies tend to focus on a single transducer, i.e. the tactile spatial acuity of the finger tips or the resolution of proprioception in the hand. We are interested in understanding how these work together to perceive complex shapes, such as those displayed by the Haptic Edge Display.

The measure of the tactile spatial acuity is often measured through a two point test to determine the minimum distance needed to discern the two points. The tactile spatial acuity of the fingertip is roughly 0.6mm, whereas the base of the finger and the palm are 5mm and 9mm respectively. This sense of touch and localization relies on slowly adapting afferents nerves known as Merkel receptors.

The proprioceptive acuity of finger joints is the measure of accuracy in determining the orientation and angle that a finger joint is moved into. This influences the ability to sense the overall shape of an enclosed object in the hand. Researchers have shown that subjects can detect with 70% accuracy changes around approximately 6° in finger joint rotation [12, 15].

Psychophysical Methods

Finger Pad Lateral Perception



(a) (b)

Figure 12: Test pieces with different pin widths are demonstrated in (a).

Ten healthy subjects were recruited to measure the lateral perception on the finger pad in both in-hand and in-pocket (through-fabric) conditions. The subjects consisted of 8 males and 2 females; 9 were right handed, and their ages ranged from 23 to 31. Subjects had various previous haptic experiences ranging from none to extensive. None of the subjects had neurological disorder, injury to the hand/arm, or any other conditions that may have affected their performance in this experiment. They were compensated for their time and the experiment was approved by the University's Institutional Review Board, and subjects gave informed consent.

The setup consisted of two arcs that are covered with two layers of denim connected by a velcro strip to simulate the in-pocket situation. Each subject faced the apparatus wearing noise-cancelling headphones for audio isolation. For the in-pocket condition, the test pieces with different pin widths, as shown in Figure 12a, were placed inside the pocket as in Figure 13. For the out-of-pocket condition, the test pieces were placed on top of the pocket. This setup was surrounded by a curtained box to allow subjects to touch the devices without visual feedback.

The two-alternative forced-choice experiment followed the method of constant stimuli [13]. For three seconds, subjects freely explored each test pieces either through the fabric or above it with non-thumb fingers of their dominant hand as shown in Figure 13. After exploring two test pieces with a three second break in between, subjects were asked to report the stimuli with higher resolution. Before the actual experiment, three practice trials with feedback were given to help subjects familiarize the process.

For each trial, one setup contained the reference test piece with pin width of 2 mm, while the other contained a comparison test piece. The reference pin width was chosen such that it was close to the pin width of the Haptic Edge Display. Each subject performed six repetitions of fully randomized trials that included seven values for the pin with w = {1, 1.5, 1.75, 2, 2.25, 2.5, 3 mm} and two conditions of either denim or no fabric covering the test piece, summing up to a total of 84 trials for experiment 1. All test pieces had a sinusoidal

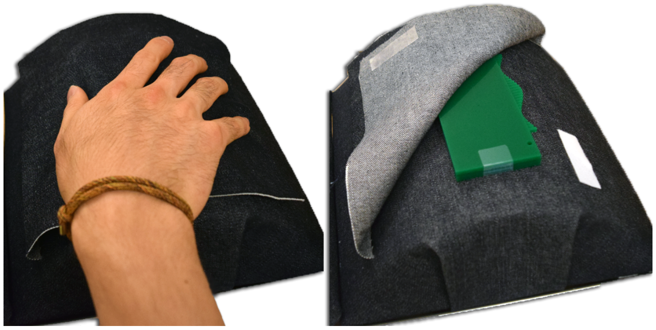


Figure 13: For the denim condition, participants felt the test piece that was placed inside two players of denim held together by a velcro strip.

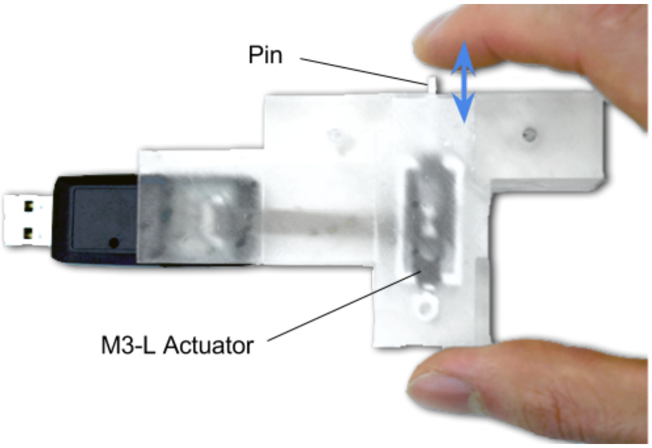


Figure 14: The apparatus used for depth perception experiment

shape with amplitude of 8.5 mm, wavelength of 50 mm, and pin spacing of 0.5 mm. During the experiment, subjects were given an optional five-minute break after every forty-two trials.

Finger Pad Depth Perception

A different set of ten healthy subjects was recruited to measure depth perception on the finger pad. The subjects consisted of 8 males and 2 females; 9 were right handed, and their ages ranged from 23 to 31. Again Subjects had various previous haptic experiences ranging from none to extensive. None of the subjects had neurological disorder, injury to the hand/arm, or any other conditions that may affect their performance in this experiment. They were compensated for their time and the experiment was approved by the Universitys Institutional Review Board, and subjects gave informed consent.

This time, instead of the pin width, the subjects were asked to report the pin height that was greater following the same procedures as Experiment 1. The apparatus differed slightly as only one device was used to provide two pin heights to the subject. A piece of fabric was added over the device for the simulated in-pocket condition. As shown in the close up view of Fig.14, M3-L linear actuator module from New Scale Technology, Inc with a position resolution of 0.5m was used to provide the desired pin height. The pin attached to M3-L had the same width and thickness as the one used in the Haptic Edge Display. Similar to Experiment 1, participants performed a total of 84 trials consisting of six repetitions with two fabric conditions (denim/no fabric) and seven pin heights h = {1.7, 1.8, 1.9, 2.0, 2.1, 2.2, 2.3 mm}. Reference pin height was chosen to be 2 mm, roughly the middle of the actuators position range.

Psychophysical Results

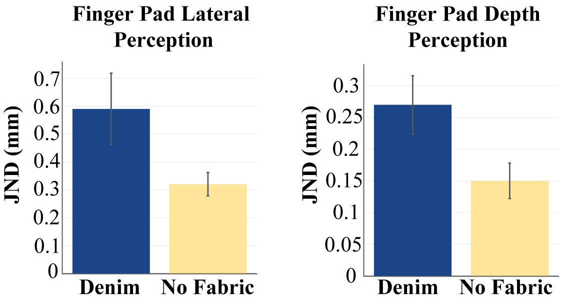
For the finger pad lateral and depth psychophysical experiments, the proportion of times each participant responded that the comparison value was greater than the reference was plotted against the comparison values. Using the psignifit MATLAB toolbox, three relevant values were computed (http://bootstrap-software.org/psignifit/): point of subjective equality (PSE), stimulus value corresponding to a proportion of 0.25 (J_{25}), and stimulus value corresponding to a proportion of 0.75 (J_{75}). The JND is defined as follows:

$$JND = \frac{J_{75} - J_{25}}{2}$$

The Weber Fraction (WF) is calculated as follows:

$$WF = \frac{JND}{PSE}$$

The results from the psychophysical experiments are summarized in Table 2. The average JNDs for lateral perception under denim and no fabric conditions are 0.59mm and 0.32mm, respectively with standard deviation of 0.41 and 0.13. The average JNDs for depth perception under denim and no fabric conditions are 0.27mm and 0.15mm, respectively with standard deviation of 0.15 and 0.09. Fig. 15 shows two bar graphs for both lateral and depth perception with error bars. Welchs two sample one-tailed t-test showed a statistically significantly difference between the JNDs under different fabric conditions for both lateral and depth perceptions with p-values of 0.035 and 0.021 respectively.



(a) (b)

Figure 15: Mean JNDs above demonstrate that there are statistically significantly difference between the two fabric conditions (denim/no fabric) for both (a) lateral and (b) depth finger pad perception.

	Lateral Perception						Depth Perception					
	Denim			No Fabric			Denim			No Fabric		
Subject	JND (mm)	PSE (mm)	WF (%)	JND (mm)	PSE (mm)	WF (%)	JND (mm)	PSE (mm)	WF (%)	JND (mm)	PSE (mm)	WF (%)
1	0.51	2.00	25.4	0.50	2.06	24.4	0.15	1.92	7.7	0.05	2.01	2.3
2	0.27	2.17	12.7	0.31	0.94	15.8	0.24	2.05	11.8	0.05	2.03	2.7
3	1.37	2.26	60.7	0.26	1.95	13.3	0.60	1.94	30.7	0.24	2.02	11.9
4	0.82	2.26	36.5	0.17	2.04	8.5	0.13	2.00	6.4	0.03	2.05	1.6
5	0.33	2.07	15.7	0.33	1.95	17.1	0.24	2.02	11.9	0.16	2.03	8.0
6	0.36	2.01	18.1	0.54	2.00	27.1	0.21	1.98	10.6	0.18	2.03	8.6
7	0.69	2.15	32.1	0.33	1.99	16.4	0.27	1.97	13.5	0.16	2.02	7.9
8	1.12	2.08	53.9	0.30	2.07	14.4	0.18	2.04	8.6	0.20	2.14	9.4
9	0.15	1.99	7.5	0.34	2.04	16.4	0.46	1.92	23.9	0.11	2.05	5.2
10	0.27	1.86	14.5	0.10	2.02	4.8	0.23	1.97	11.5	0.30	2.00	15.2
Mean	0.59	2.08	27.7	0.32	2.01	15.8	0.27	1.98	13.6	0.15	2.04	7.3
Std.Dev.	0.41	0.13	18.0	0.13	0.05	6.6	0.15	0.05	7.7	0.09	0.04	4.4

Table 2: Finger Pad Lateral and Depth Perception

DISCUSSION AND FUTURE WORK

The psychophysical experiments provided results that suggests a need for different control approaches for in-pocket and in-hand scenarios. Due to the intervention of the fabric, a person's haptic perception capability decreases, thus requiring greater stimuli for differential detection. Thus, we will have to take into consideration this reduced sensitivity when designing an application for in-pocket scenario.

From our psychophysical experiments and informal testing with the device we found that for in-hand haptic feedback very little travel was required to create a compelling sensation. The dynamic affordances require more travel, but many other applications and scenarios can be conveyed with little travel. This suggests that future versions of the Haptic Edge Display could be built with substantially less travel, and potentially faster and thinner with less power consumption, such as dielectric elastomer actuators [24], polymeric actuators [22], or hydraulic wells [9].

One of the shortcomings expressed in the first prototype by people was that while the buttons looked like they could be pressed, they didn't actually feel like press-able buttons. We tried to address this in our second prototype by moving to the piezoelectric actuators which are back-drivable. We also plan on closing the control loop for the pins using a carbon mask linear potentiometer. This will enable us to not only control the pins more accurately but also enable us to sense the force applied by the user. Knowing whether the user is lightly tapping or aggressively pushing on the pin can help in understanding the intent of the user.

While the piezoelectric actuators enabled us to solve many of the shortcomings of our first prototype, they have not come without their own problems. Since each pair of piezo actuators consumes approximately 0.15A at 10V, about 3A at 10V is needed to run 40 piezo actuators. This is equivalent to 30W of power and is more than what can be supplied with a typical battery. Greater power efficiency of the device could be achieved by exploring other actuator driver chip options.

There are a number of limitations in overall dimensions of the Haptic Edge Display constrained by the size of the piezo actuators as well as the mechanical linkages for the pins and position feedback, so that while the height of the actuator is only 3.5mm, a total height of 7mm is required. This could be improved with different techniques for position sensing and using the actuator's rod as the pin. Additionally, due to the need to layer two columns of actuators to achieve the current resolution in both prototypes, we were only able to cover one edge of the mobile phone. However, we see great potential in adding Haptic Edge Display to all edges of the device. This could provide even greater feedback possibilities especially for the non-dominant hand. The addition of these locations could increase the range of applications feasible with the device. We would also like to explore moving the pins to the back of the device.

CONCLUSION

Given the lack of sufficient haptic feedback in current mobile systems, the Haptic Edge Display is designed to augment the experience in current mobile tactile interaction. While some mobile devices attempt to utilize the rich haptic sensation with vibrating motors, it is not up to the high standard of the intricate human hand as demonstrated in the psyhophysical experiments described here. Although not completely up to the finger pad resolution, the Haptic Edge Display attempts to bridge the gap between the current mobile tactile interaction and the ideal haptic interaction. We have demonstrated through two prototype systems and a number of applications, how Haptic Edge Displays can be utilized for providing Dynamic Physical Affordances, in-pocket "pull" notifications, and rich haptic display. Psychophysical experiments on lateral and depth finger perceptions were performed for both in-pocket and out-of-pocket scenarios. The results informed us of the necessary parameters, pin width and height of an ideal Haptic Edge Display in order to match the resolution of human fingers for both scenarios. The high resolution prototype was able to reduce the pin width from 3.5mm to 1.6mm, approaching the lateral resolution of 0.32mm.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The authors thank Christopher Ploch, Professor Michael Bernstein, and Lydia Chilton for their assistance in fabrication, planning, and analysis of this project. This work was supported by Intel Corporation and Kwanjeong Educational Foundation. (More.)

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