

DESIGN

Computers

DEVICE USES IR, ULTRASONIC SIGNALS

Wireless joystick 'fingered'

BY MICHELE CLARKE

Singapore — IPC Peripherals has announced a wireless, finger-mounted joystick controller that uses ultrasonic position-sensing and infrared control signals—marking one of the first commercial introductions of a technology heretofore shown mainly by academic researchers. Displayed at Comdex/Spring, the peripheral brings a new dimension of wireless control for games and 3-D applications.

The two-button, battery-powered joystick, called the PDV-100 CyberMouse, straps to a user's index finger and transmits to a microprocessor-equipped joint bar that attaches to the upper left corner of any desktop monitor and plugs into a serial port. The unit transmits using the RS-232C interface protocol at 4,800 baud.

Under normal-use conditions, the remote unit runs for about a year, using a CR1632

lithium battery. A sleep mode is invoked after one minute of inactivity, said Robert Hawk, an IPC Peripherals technical marketing manager.



IPC Peripherals' CyberMouse.

An 8-kbyte mouse-emulation driver emulates standard desktop movements, said Hawk. In 3-D mode, the joystick also maneuvers along the z-axis, he said, by sensing "depth" from the remote joystick's proximity

to the monitor-mounted base unit.

In that mode, the unit can create complex 3-D images, changing the thickness of lines, color, size and place of an object simultaneously, said Hawk.

Resolution is 100 dots/inch, and the sampling rate is up to 50 updates/second, said Hawk. The unit requires 10 mA of power over the RS-232C port.

Tracking speed is up to 30 inches/s and current tracking distance is up to three feet (a longer-distance version is under development), Hawk said. The company is currently recruiting game developers to support the device.

Most of IPC's research and development is done in Singapore and China with engineering support in the United States and Europe.

The company is currently establishing a research lab in Fremont, Calif.

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BY RICK BO

Ann Arbor, Mich. — Communication ed its assault on router market last launched its Di mote RO-1. The brings the com based internetwo to a new entry-le small office/home

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Digital plans to merge OpenVM

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