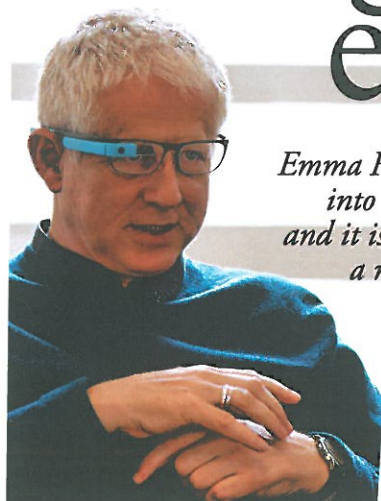


# Google eyed!

*Emma Freud has looked into the future – and it is the size of half a mangetout*



Richard Curtis and Emma do Glass. Left, ultra-hi-tech colonises the kitchen



It may not have escaped your notice that I don't, actually, in truth, being entirely honest with you, know anything at all about gadgets. Don't blame me – blame the editor who thought it would be a good idea to get a techno-moron to write this column. Consequently, I panicked somewhat when I got the call every technology journalist waits for: 'Do you want to try out the newest most exciting innovative game-changing gadget of all time?' There were clearly two possible answers: 'Er... No, because I won't know how to work it, youth people will laugh at me and my game will be up' or 'Yes, bring it round instantly so I can be down with the kids and attempt to use it to video my guinea pig.' I went for the latter.

If you are the only person left in Britain who doesn't know what Google Glass is, first congratulate yourself on being, like, totally prehistoric and down with the dinosaurs and, secondly, listen up. Imagine a teeny-tiny computer the size of half your little finger – as long as you are a girl with quite small fingers. If you are a man with quite fat fingers,

imagine a computer the size of half a mangetout. Now imagine the mangetout is entirely transparent. Picture it stuck to the top right side of your glasses and turn it on by flicking your head back like an Eighties Sloane Ranger. Now ask the mangetout to send a message, photograph something, google an enquiry or give you directions. It will show you all these things translucently on its teeny-tiny screen. Plus, it will translate foreign languages, take 10-second videos of whatever you are seeing and whisper stuff into the arm of the spectacles just behind your ear. It IS the future. So here, my kind and patient reader, is what happened when I was finally allowed to put my dirty fingers all over it.

Emily from Google arrives at my house. 'Where are the Google Glasses?' I say. 'Do you want to wear Glass now?' she says. My first error – lose the 'Google', then lose 'the'. It's just 'Glass'. I put on Glass and do the flicky thing. I ask it to take a photo... It photographs what I am looking at, which at that moment is Ron, my

guinea pig. I ask it to take a video. It creates a 10-second video of Ron looking at me in confusion as he knows I don't need glasses. I ask it to google guinea pigs and it shows me the Wiki page for this king of species. Who knew they were a food source for many indigenous South Americans? I do now, but I'm not telling Ron.

I decide to make some pancakes for my children's tea. Flick head. 'OK, Glass – google recipe for pancakes for my children's tea. Please.' A Google list appears. I scroll down by stroking the side arm of the specs and choose a link. It stays hovering in my eyeline, guiding me through the cooking. I feel like the mother of the Thunderbirds boys. I like it.

We leave the house and I spend an hour wandering around west London trying to work out if this miracle of technology might become our new reality, while looking like a 'glasshole'. The satnav element is remarkable. Definitely its best feature. Quiet guidance at every corner, like having an A-Z inserted into your brain. A stranger asks if I can see everybody naked with them. I tell him I can. He is delighted. (I can't, btw – though I did then google 'naked people' and saw lots.)

I drop into my current boyfriend's office, where he is having an important meeting. Everyone just wants to try on Glass and take photos of each other. I mention that the real test is to have sex while wearing them so you can video what you see close up as long as it lasts no more than 10 seconds. Nobody wants to try them on after that.

I ask Emily if I can keep Glass and she says no. They aren't being launched in the UK until the end of the year, by which time they will have designerglassesglass, prescriptionglassesglass and sunglassessglass. They will also, by then, have sorted out a price, which will be in the same ballpark as a good smartphone. I give back Glass and life instantly feels less complicated but less fun. #addict □

## SHOULD HAVE GONE TO GOOGLE GLASS...

### IN ITS FAVOUR

- You look like no more of a knob wearing it than you do with a Bluetooth earpiece – and we've all vaguely got used to those.
- More people wanted to talk to me while I wore Glass than have done in decades.

- I have never been more interesting to my children EVER.
- Until they are found on the faces of half the population, they will be a benign and friendly thing of interest between friends and strangers.

- A surgeon in the US wears Glass in theatre so he can refer to scans without looking away from the patient. A firefighter uses Glass to show floor plans of the building he enters. All good.

### THE DOWNSIDES

- When you look at the screen, it would be an untruth to say that you are looking your best. An expression of strain, confusion, awe and cross-eyedness is not going to help you pick up boys.

- I trod in some dog poo while I was wearing them, as my eyes (and brain) were focused on the screen, not the pavement. This might happen a lot with them, which won't help on the romantic front either.

### THE VERDICT

However much people complain that they are ridiculous, intrusive and an affront to privacy, I would like them back, please. It's like having Stephen Fry taking up residency on your forehead. □

