

Apple Buys Facial Motion Capture Maker

Written by Marco Attard
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Apple buys Faceshift, a Zurich-based developer of technology allowing users to create animated avatars able to capture facial expressions in real time.



The acquisition was rumoured back in September 2015, but confirmation comes via TechCrunch and a typically terse company statement reading “Apple buys smaller technology companies from time to time, and we generally do not discuss our purpose or plans.”

Launched in 2011 out of the Computer Graphics and Geometry Laboratory at the Swiss Federal Institute of Technology, FaceShift technology is impressive enough to merit use in the latest Star Wars movie. The technology can be applied to either games (with characters changing expressions to mimic the player) and movie special effects (it makes the animation of faces easier). It can also find enterprise use in the field of facial recognition-based technology.

Apple gives no word of how it will actually use FaceShift, but it already owns patents and companies related to the motion capture, facial recognition and augmented reality fields--specifically European startups PrimeSense, Polar Rose and Metalo. Does the acquisition mean future Apple products will implement the technology in some form or another?

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