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Microsoft Chairman Bill Gates demonstrates the Microsoft Touch Wall Microsoft

Bill Gates: All Surfaces Will Be Windows Computers

All surfaces everywhere

Thanks to a new trend which is responsible for increasingly pointing technology in the direction of adopting natural user interfaces, Bill Gates' initial goal for Microsoft - putting a computer on every desk in every home - is somewhat evolving. In fact, it has at this point in time transformed into efforts of integrating Windows computers into all the traditional surfaces that are currently inert, failing to represent items of focus or interaction in any manner. But this will change in the future, as Microsoft labors to introduce a Windows computer into every surface possible, be it a tabletop or a wall, and make not only the operating system but also the touch-based, gesture recognition UI, along with additional examples of natural user interfaces technology ubiquitous. "Our view is that all the surfaces, horizontal surfaces, vertical surfaces, will eventually have an inexpensive screen display capability, and software that sees what you're doing there, so it's completely interactive. When I say everywhere, I mean the individual's office, I mean the home, the living room, all of those things. The cost of the hardware is not that great, and the quality of the software is improving substantially", Gates stated. During his presentation at the Microsoft CEO Summit 2008, Chairman Bill Gates demonstrated the Touch Wall, a new 4-foot-by-6-foot prototype which is not a vertical equivalent of Surface, introduced in early 2007, but a new example of multi-touch user interface technology. Touch Wall is not developed by the same team that is building Microsoft Surface, but is instead a project developed through the combined efforts of Microsoft Research and Office Labs. The joint venture produced a touch-sensitive interface in a vertical surface but also the underlying software, labeled as Plex. "Well, I always like to show something that's new, because that's kind of risky and exciting, and so what I thought I'd show is this future whiteboard, the intelligent whiteboard. So far, this display has just had the nice meeting logo, but, in fact, it's running a new piece of software. It's got some scanning cameras down here at the bottom, so whenever I go up to it and say just touch it, the software will notice that, theoretically", Gates revealed.