

Eye-tracking software will look at you shop



New computer software will soon be keeping an eye on you, or on your eyes, when you go shopping. It is called the Sideways project because it tracks the movement of your eyes as you glance at products on shelves. The researchers, from Britain's Lancaster University, told the BBC that the technology would be a common feature in stores before the end of the decade. Senior researcher Andreas Bulling said: "The system uses a single ordinary camera...[It] detects the faces of people walking by and calculates where the eyes are relative to the eye corners." This information is then used to flash up adverts related to what products you were looking at longest as you pass by video screens ahead of you.

Eye-tracking technology is being used in a number of different situations. One is to help motorists better identify cyclists on roads. Studies suggest drivers are five times likelier to spot pedestrians than people riding bicycles. This could significantly cut the number of road deaths. Eye-tracking can also be used to allow people to use their eyes as a mouse to scroll through and select content on screens. Disabled people are already using this technology to enhance their daily mobility. Last month the tech giant Samsung launched a smartphone that monitors what users look at on-screen. Mr Bulling said: "It is really gaining momentum. I fully expect this technology to become available widely in the near future."