Era Of Wearable Computers May Begin To Dawn In 2013

[1]

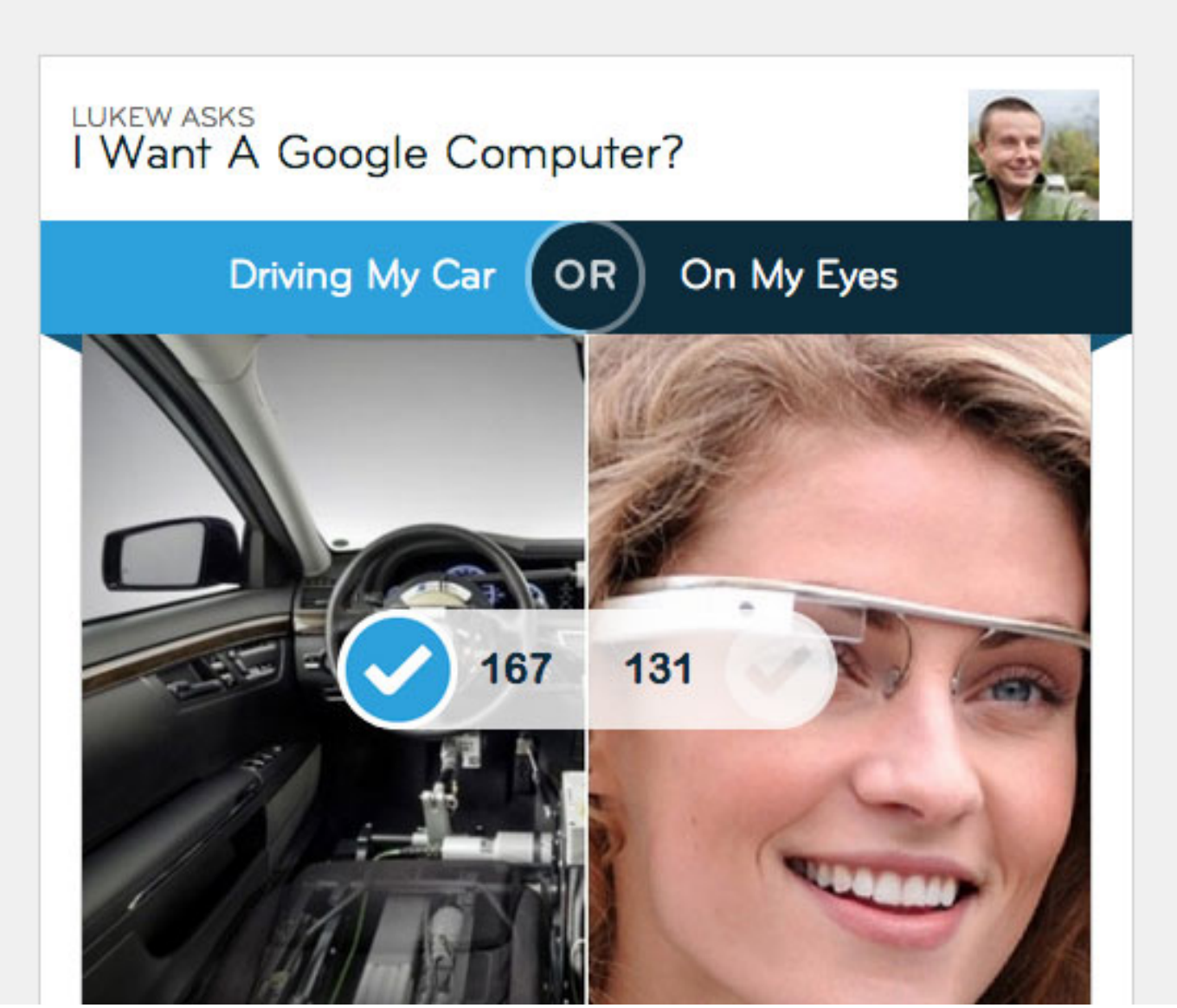
2013 could be the year that consumers get used to the idea of wearable (and drivable) computers. Rumors, analyst predictions and fanciful design studies of wrist computers from Apple [2] and Google [3] abound. Car companies are integrating Apple Siri [4] and Google Maps [5] into their upcoming models. And, of course, Google [6]‘s Glass [7] and self-driving cars.

Piper Jaffray analyst Gene Munster looks for a wearable device from Apple [8] in 2014 (or later) but remember he’s the same guy who’s been predicting an AppleTV for years (he now says 2013!) Mobile [9] consultant Luke Wroblewski [10] is interested in this problem and has posted a couple of poll questions on his Polar app [11] to test the waters (click above and below to vote!).

“I think the interesting question here is what will eat the smartphone?” Wroblewski tells me. “What will absorb what it can do and more?” In his presentation Mobile to the Future [12], he described the 7 forms of mass media and how mobile can do everything the previous 6 could do and more. Wroblewski now thinks that “wearable/embedded computers have a good chance of absorbing smartphone capabilities and doing even more.”

Smartphones have big gaps in battery life, network connectivity and form factor. With the small screen comes the social awkwardness of starting at a glowing black rectangle all day. Wearables and ubiquitous computing will begin to address these issues, first in the form of smart accessories: glasses, bracelets, watches, earpieces, etc. Computers embedded in things (like your car and refrigerator) will be next.

But when it comes to wearables like glasses, Wroblewski points out that “its a huge commitment to *wear* something all day so it needs to add value and not be intrusive.” That is what led him to pose these question on Polar about *where* people want a computer. His samples are small and tilted towards designers and tech insiders, but I think it’s safe to say that your wrist is the next frontier.



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