

Remote touching allowed

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IT'S the type of tech perfectly suited to the COVID age.

Sydney scientists have developed a new device which recreates the sense of touch in a revolutionary realistic way.

The “haptic” technology mimics the experience of touch by stimulating localised areas of the skin in ways that are similar to what is felt in the real world, through force, vibration or motion.

The team of engineers at University of NSW said the device could be turned into gloves that would let the wearer “touch a loved one during a video call” or allow a doctor to examine a patient during a remote consultation.

The haptic glove could also see a gamer pick up and handle a virtual tool in a video game.

UNSW Medical Robotics Lab director Dr Thanh Nho Do said the researchers’ new technology overcame issues with existing haptic devices by introducing a novel method to recreate an effective haptic sensation via soft, miniature artificial “muscles”.

“Our soft, wearable haptic glove enables people to feel virtual or remote objects in a more realistic and immersive way,” Dr Do said. “When we do things with our hands, such as holding a mobile phone or typing on a keyboard, all are impossible without haptics.”

A university spokesman said: “Pending tests, these ideas could become reality in a couple of years.”