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Wearable bracelet device that cools or heats skin for comfort wins Proto Labs' Cool Idea! Award

Wristify's thermoelectric bracelet helps people be more comfortable

The creators and developers of a wearable bracelet that actively cools or heats one's skin for comfort, have been presented with the latest Proto Labs Cool Idea! Award, a service grant given to innovative companies by quick-turn manufacturer Proto Labs, Ltd.

Wristify, which is being developed by Cambridge, Mass. U.S.-based Embr Labs, is a "stylish bracelet" that cools or heats the skin, say the developers, similar to what happens when you dip your toes in a cold lake on a hot, sunny day, or when you wrap your hands around a hot cup of tea on a cold night.

"The market demand for wearable devices is growing," says Proto Labs founder Larry Lukis. "Wristify fits well into this niche and should successfully ride the wearable device trend. I see Wristify taking a prominent place next to another wearable bracelet that's utilitarian — the Fitbit." That could happen soon. Developers say that Wristify should be on the market in the next year. Retail price has yet to be determined.

Wristify's concept is that the thermoelectric bracelet can influence a person's perception of how warm or cold a room feels, by sending hot or cold pulses to the wrist. This provides personalised thermal relief directly to the wearer, potentially resolving those situations in which some people think a room is too cold versus those who feel overheated.

For now, people will use the device for personal comfort, though Embr Labs developers say the ultimate aim is to reduce the energy consumption of buildings, by cooling and heating the individual, not the building.

Sam Shames, one of four co-founders of Embr Labs, says developers are using the Cool Idea! Award manufacturing grant for various custom prototype parts from Proto Labs such as CNC-machined aluminium enclosures and Santoprene bottom components. "The prototypes we have built out from Proto Labs' manufactured parts have been the best prototypes used to date," Shames says. "The parts have been greatly beneficial in the prototype phase and we've been really pleased with the general aesthetic and design, which have a sleek look and feel to them. Plus, the functionality of these parts has been great."

About Cool Idea! Award

Since 2011, the Cool Idea! Award has provided more than £500,000 in Proto Labs prototyping and low-volume production services to entrepreneurs developing new products in Europe and the United States. Unlike other product awards that recognise products after they're in mass production and on store shelves, the Cool Idea! Award is meant to help innovative ideas come to life. For more information about the Cool Idea! Award and to apply, visit www.protolabs.co.uk/coolidea.

About Proto Labs

Proto Labs is the world's fastest digital manufacturing source for custom prototypes and low-volume production parts. The technology-enabled company uses advanced 3D printing, CNC machining and injection moulding technologies to produce parts within days. The result is an unprecedented speed-to-market value for product designers and engineers worldwide. Visit protolabs.co.uk for more information.

About Embr Labs and Wristify

Embr Labs was founded in 2013 by four members of the MIT Department of Materials Science and Engineering Department: Matthew Smith, Ph.D. '12, Sam Shames, SB '14, Michael Gibson, SB '13 and current Ph.D. candidate David Cohen-Tanugi, PhD '15. All are passionate about developing technologies that improve people's lives and the planet. The Embr Labs team has benefitted greatly from the mentorship and support they have received from the Martin Trust Center for MIT Entrepreneurship and the MIT Venture Mentoring Service. Wristify won first prize at the 2013 MADMEC competition at MIT, participated in the 2014 Global Founders Skills Accelerator at MIT, and were finalists in the Intel Make It Wearable Competition. For more information, visit embrlabs.com.

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