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Microsoft gets into dating game

Face recognition software patent published

by Katie Scott published on 2 March 2008

Microsoft is developing a mobile dating application that will play on that oh so human of traits - narcissism.

Details of a patent entitled Image-Based Face Search have been leaked onto the web.

It appears that the computing giant is developing a complex facial recognition software application.

The patent explains how a photo could be uploaded from a mobile phone or PC and compared with millions of other pictures to find similar matching faces.

So whether you are looking for a partner who will compliment your looks or someone who looks like the celebrity you have idolised since you were 10 - this could find them.

The software also includes a HotOrNot style application for which the user is shown a face and then rates it according to how attractive they find the person.

And it allows you to go into details - for example - do you like their hair colour; is their nose too big etc.

Microsoft can then take this information and find some matches that are more suited to the user's tastes.

Microsoft explains in the patent: "Traditional image retrieval techniques, such as those used in facial-recognition, cannot readily be applied to image-based face retrieval for online dating, since those conventional techniques typically focus on searching for a specific person (i.e., the same person depicted in the image used as the query), not other similar-looking individuals as desired in the online dating arena. Also, traditional image



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retrieval applications are not concerned with how to evaluate similarities between two persons' faces, and how to understand what people perceive and evaluate when viewing similar faces".

"The image-based search described herein allows users to search profiles using a desired reference or 'query' image. This image based search may be implemented as an alternative to the textual queries used on most online dating sites, or may be combined with such textual queries to provide an augmented image-based face retrieval filter."

Well that makes it all clear doesn't it. But what's completely clear is that dating agencies will be clambering over themselves if this patent becomes a reality.