

## Chat Funner with New 'Pocket Avatars' App

June 19, 2014 – Intel Corporation today announced the availability of [Pocket Avatars](#), a new over-the-top (OTT) mobile messaging app with a fun twist. Using a mobile device's standard camera and microphone, Pocket Avatars captures a user's facial expressions, head movements and voice and allows people to create, send and receive personalized 3-D video animated messages using avatar characters. Proprietary facial gesture software used by the app is based on years of research by [Intel Labs](#). It is also the result of collaboration between Intel experts in clients, servers, message delivery, Web programming, 3-D tracking, modeling, animation and video rendering, who came together to enable this unique experience.

More than 40 avatars are offered at launch through the in-app library and new characters will be introduced regularly. Many avatars are free; some require a nominal purchase – most are priced at 99 cents at time of launch. In addition to sharing avatars, users can also send standard text within the app for a comprehensive chatting experience. The app is available for free download in the App Store\* and Google Play\* in the United States and Canada.

Pocket Avatars will also provide a new way for companies and organizations to communicate with their audiences. At launch, brands and companies including American Greetings\* Care Bear franchise, Annoying Orange\*, Gumby and Pokey \*, The Jim Henson Company\*, the LEGO Group\*, Mr. Bill\* and the San Diego Chicken\* are offering content through Pocket Avatars.

### Creating an Avatar Message

A user selects an avatar from the library, points the camera at his or her face and begins talking into the camera. As a user talks, raises or lowers their eyebrows, blinks, moves their head from side-to-side, or nods, the avatar reflects the user's expressions in real time, recording both the audio and facial data. At the conclusion of the 15-second period, the user may review their message before sending it to one of their friends.

### Technologies behind Pocket Avatars

The array of technologies that come together to enable this experience is broad. Pocket Avatars offers:

- Sophisticated, real-time facial and head gesture tracking technology that works on mobile devices.
- Emotive personal messages that recognize a wide variety of different facial expressions including blinking, raising eyebrows, smiling big and smile and also allows user to trigger animations that include sticking out a tongue and blowing a kiss
- Efficient and robust algorithms running on currently available processor power capture images even with varied lighting and user movements.
- An interactive platform for user-generated content for companies and organizations to engage their audiences in a fun and natural way.

### Avatars from Premium Brands

Companies are creating avatars for their content and are using the Pocket Avatars app as a new way to engage with their audience, including:

American Greetings Care Bear franchise

- Avatars: Grumpy Bear and Cheer Bear

- “We fell in love with the platform – the facial tracking technology is the best, most expressive we've seen. It's easy to use and a lot of fun! We think it's going to be huge! We also have plans to introduce the other Care Bears to Pocket Avatars and potentially expand to include the entire kingdom of Care-a-Lot,” said Derek Roberto, director of New Media at American Greetings.

## Annoying Orange

- Avatars: Annoying Orange, Apple and Marshmallow
- “Pocket Avatars offers our Annoying Orange fans a new kind of immersive experience that allows users to become part of our episodes in a bigger, fun way, using their own voices to make their own Annoying Orange videos that they can share across their social networks,” said Dane Boedigheimer, the creator, producer and voice of Annoying Orange.

## Gumby and Pokey

- Avatars: Gumby and Pokey
- “For generations, fans have formed lasting emotional connections with the character Gumby – the world's original clayboy – is a timeless icon and natural avatar. He is synonymous with ‘flexibility’ as he can morph into any shape. With his adventurous spirit, bright outlook on life and desire to leave a place better than how he found it, Gumby is loveable and irresistible. As the theme song says, ‘If you've got a heart, then Gumby's a part of you!’ Everyone has a little Gumby (and Pokey) inside,” said Joe Clokey, president, Premavision/Clokey Productions.

## The Jim Henson Company

- Avatar: Gobo from “Fraggle Rock”
- “Well, first of all, it's just fun! We have a history of being innovative and it is always exciting to work with partners who have a creative, inventive spirit. Also, the facial gesture recognition technology is really impressive, and we think our fans will love to engage with Gobo Fraggle in a brand new way,” said Anna Jordan-Douglass, vice president, Digital Development and Interactive Media at The Jim Henson Company.

## The LEGO Group

- Avatars: Emmet and Wildstyle – two characters introduced in the hit “The LEGO Movie.”
- “Everyone who has played with LEGO bricks has wanted to be part of the imaginary world, and we saw this as a fun way to let all LEGO fans around the world be a LEGO minifigure!” said Lars Silberbauer, global director, Social Media & Search at the LEGO Group.

## Mr. Bill

- Avatar: Mr. Bill of Saturday Night Live Fame
- “I always love trying out new technologies on Mr. Bill, and the Pocket Avatars is a perfect way for people to make up their own Mr. Bill adventures,” said Walter Williams, the creator, producer and voice of Mr. Bill.

## San Diego Chicken

- Avatar: The San Diego Chicken
- “Intel has a fabled and glorious history as a cutting edge brand in world technology, trusted for innovation. When the opportunity came about to associate with them on a revolutionary and fun form of new age communication in its groundbreaking stage, I just had to invest myself into the process,” said Ted Giannoulas, the San Diego Chicken, famous sports mascot.



## Looking Ahead

Intel will continue to refine the app with new features and capabilities. These include a constant stream of new avatars and improved tracking technology with new facial expressions that operate in a broader range of lighting environments. The app currently is available in English in the United States and Canada. Intel also plans to expand this to other countries and languages in the near future.

## About Intel

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