



## How do you hold hands if you're in a long distance relationship?

SFU researchers have created gloves to make couples feel like they're together, even when they're not

By Jesse Johnston, CBC News



If you're in a long distance relationship, there are times when phone calls, FaceTime and Skype conversations with your partner just don't cut it. There is, after all, no substitute for physical touch. That's why researchers at Simon Fraser University's School of Interactive Arts and Technology are developing ways to make couples feel like they're together when they're a world apart. One of the breakthroughs associate professor Carman Neustaedter and his students have created is called a Flex-N-Feel Glove.

"What happens is each partner wears each of the glove and when one partner flexes their fingers in one glove, it can be felt in the other glove using vibrations," Neustaedter said. "We've mapped it between the fingers of each glove so that each segment of the finger actually produces a vibration of that specific part of the other person's hand."

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- Partners can use the gloves to hold hands, or even give massages.

"It provides them with a new way to feel the presence of a real person and give them an additional sense of intimacy that they actually get through physical touch," he said. "We've been trying it out where they've augmented video connections and it provides more than you'd get from a standard Skype call." Neustaedter and his students are still testing the gloves, but they hope one day couples all over the world will be able to buy them. "Because these couples are living apart, they really long to be with their partner so they really want to feel like they're in the same place. It's a prototype, so we only have one but we could easily build multiple versions of the glove. You just need the right eyes on it to try and productize it."

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