13 March 2009

By: Georgiana Bobolicu, Gadgets Editor

Canadian filmmaker Rob Spence
Daily Mail

Filmmaker to Film Documentary with Prosthetic Eyeball Camera

He hopes to secretly record people for a project commenting on the global spread of surveillance cameras

Rob Spence, a Canadian one-eyed documentary filmmaker is preparing to work with a video camera concealed in a prosthetic eyeball for an upcoming documentary he's making about the prevalence of surveillance cameras. He'll secretly film people while talking to them and then get their permission to be in his film in an attempt to tackle privacy and surveillance issues as they pertain to society.

Canadian Rob Spence's eye was damaged in a childhood shooting accident and it was removed three years ago. Now, he is in the final stages of developing a camera to turn the handicap into an advantage. With the camera tucked inside a prosthetic eye, he hopes to be able to record the same things he sees with his working eye, his muscles moving the camera eye just like his real one. Spence has said he plans to become a "human surveillance machine" to explore privacy issues and whether people are "sleepwalking into an Orwellian society." His special equipment will consist of a camera, originally designed for colonoscopies, a battery and a wireless transmitter. It's a challenge to get everything to fit inside the prosthetic eye, but Spence has had help from top engineers, including Steve Mann, who co-founded the wearable computers research group at Massachusetts Institute of Technology in Cambridge, Massachusetts. The camera was provided by Santa Clara, California-based OmniVision, a company that specializes in the miniature cameras found in cell phones, laptops and endoscopes. Zafer Zamboglu, staff technical product manager at OmniVision, has said he thinks that success with the eye camera would accelerate research into using the technology to restore vision to blind people. The team expects to get the camera to work in the next month. It will be the same color as Spence's working eye and the filmmaker also believes it'll make for more natural on-camera interviews.

We are just a few, but there are many of you, Softpedia users, out there. That's why we thought it would be a good idea to create an email address for you to help us a little in finding gadgets we missed. Interesting links are bound to be posted with recognition going mainly to those who submit. The address is .

Copyright (c) 2001-2012 Softpedia. All rights reserved. Softpedia™ and Softpedia™ logo are registered trademarks of SoftNews NET SRL.