

3M Announces the Launch of Web-based Visual Attention Service

- New internet service from 3M quickly and accurately predicts the visual impact of creative work -

3M today announced the launch of its new Visual Attention Service (VAS), using the Windows Azure platform from Microsoft. The new Web-based service from 3M makes it possible for designers to test the effectiveness of their content using visual attention models which are based on algorithms that predict where a viewer's attention will go in a scene.

Photos, creative content, packaging concepts and all manner of creative media can be evaluated in different scenes or contexts. Users simply upload images to VAS from their web browsers. Then application's processing engine evaluates the image for its "visual saliency" and returns a map of the image that indicates, using markings such as those seen on a heat map, which areas of the images are most likely to attract viewer attention.

"We feel confident that VAS, based on 3M's more than 30 years of research into the workings of the human visual system, will help our customers take advantage of sophisticated algorithms and get simple, powerful design feedback almost instantly," said Bill Smyth, business manager, 3M Digital Out of Home Department. Smyth added, "By working with the Windows Azure platform from Microsoft, we were able to make the service immediately available on a global basis and pass along savings to our customers."

"3M's Visual Attention Service is a great example of a company leveraging the Windows Azure platform to rapidly develop and deploy next generation solutions for its customers," said Prashant Ketkar, senior director of product marketing for Windows Azure at Microsoft Corp. "Creative solutions like 3M's are amplified by the computing power of the Windows Azure platform."

For more information about the 3M Visual Attention Service, visit www.3M.com/vas.

About 3M

A recognized leader in research and development, 3M produces thousands of innovative products for dozens of diverse markets. 3M's core strength is applying its more than 40 distinct technology platforms – often in combination – to a wide array of customer needs. With \$25 billion in sales, 3M employs 75,000 people worldwide and has operations in more than 60 countries. For more information, visit www.3M.com.

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