

VIRAL

Scientists demonstrated how you can send lemonade over the internet



DIGITAL TRENDS By Luke Dormehl

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File photo: A Secret Service agent watches over a man who set up a lemonade stand outside a private residence. (REUTERS/Jim Young)

What could be better than having a cool glass of lemonade on a hot day? How about having a cool glass of lemonade on a hot day -- that's served over the internet?

That's exactly what scientists at the National University of Singapore have been working on, with an experiment designed to [simulate the taste and appearance of lemonade](#) in a regular glass of tap water using a system of electrodes and sensors.

"The system consists of three main components: the lemonade sensor, communication protocol, and a customized tumbler, acting as the lemonade simulator," researcher [Nimesha Ranasinghe](#) told Digital Trends. "Initially, the sensor captures the color and the pH value of the lemonade, and encodes this information based on an established communication protocol for wireless transmission. On receiving the information from the sensor, the lemonade simulator overlays the color of the drink on plain water using an RGB Light Emitting Diode (LED), and simulates sour taste sensations on the user's tongue via electrical stimulation [by] applying controlled electrical pulses on the tip of tongue."

According to Ranasinghe, there are a few possibilities that the work opens up. "We believe similar technologies will be helpful for sharing beverage or real flavor experiences with remote people digitally," he said. "This will also helpful to cut down the calorie intake for patients on restricted diets. More interestingly, this technology will allow digital controllability or customization of the flavors in a beverage -- for example using a mobile app."

There's still work to be done, though. Without a scent element, which is far more responsible for how we taste things than many people realize, the taste spectrum that can be transmitted is fairly narrow. The team is now trying to integrate this sensory aspect, and is also working out how to transmit a sense of fizziness.

Over time, the plan is to be able to simulate any drink available. If that could help cut down on teeth-decaying sugars, or even allow a person to sip an "alcoholic" tasting drink without getting drunk, this may well turn out to be important research.

We'll keep checking our in boxes, just in case. You never know when someone's going to email us a beer!

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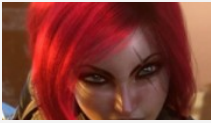
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