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## **TrueVision Systems steps into world of 3D with Leica deal**

*By Stephen Nellis on May 24, 2013*

Goleta-based TrueVision Systems, a maker of 3D display systems for surgical microscopes, is now powering the world's second-largest microscope maker's first 3D product.

TrueVision's relationship with Leica Microsystems began last year when the German firm agreed to resell TrueVision's technology alongside its microscopes, which are used in a variety of procedures on the eyes and brain, among other things. But TrueVision's technology is now completely integrated with Leica's microscopes, eliminating the need for a separate cart or display. The 3D systems are important for eye and brain surgery because the precision cutting depths are critical.

The key development for TrueVision is volume. The company currently has about 45 systems on order with Leica, but that number could eventually grow to more than 700 a year if the technology proves popular. And if the hardware catches on, TrueVision can move deeper into the realm of guidance software for specific procedures.

"It's a tremendous inflection point in our company. By combining with the No. 2 microscope company and being integral to their product, it's going to define a revenue stream that will make our company very cash positive," said TrueVision CEO Forrest Fleming. "But also, it will populate the world with platforms we can follow on with application software and generate multiple revenue streams with different surgical procedures."

Fleming said there are about 100 different procedures that the company could develop software for.

Here's how it works: Using digital image analysis, TrueVision's software can overlay cutting guides and other information onto the image the doctor sees.

In the future, the company's software could even integrate data taken from pre-operation procedures such as CT scans — which can see through tissue — and overlay depth information about what's beneath the surface of brain tissue to assist a surgeon.

"It could be a better step, in some ways, than robotics," Fleming said. "What robotics does is extend a more stable version of the instrument from the surgeon's body. The surgeon's mind is in control of the robot. What we do is give the surgeon's mind help. We don't help him cut, but we help tell him where to cut."

At this point, TrueVision is selling its hardware and basic operating system through Leica but is handling the sales of its specific applications through its own sales force so it can work directly with surgeons. "It's no longer a separate visual system — he's using information from the product through every step of the procedure. This is much more detailed, and it's important to get it right," Fleming said. "We want to make sure it's well defined before turning it over."

Fleming said that TrueVision currently has about 36 employees. As it expands, the company may hire more development staff on the South Coast, but most of its hires are likely to come across the country and internationally in the form of sales and marketing staff.