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TRUEVISION LOOKS FOR GROWTH WITH EYE SURGERY SYSTEM PATENT

By: *Stephen Nellis*
Staff Writer

Goleta-based TrueVision Systems has won a patent for computer eye surgery guidance that it says could open the door to new licensing revenue.

TrueVision began as maker of 3D, heads-up microscope systems for eye and brain surgeons. Instead of peering through tiny eyepieces, surgeons could view large 3D images on a projector. Those systems formed the basis of a successful partnership with Leica Microsystems, one of the biggest makers of surgical microscopes in the world.

But TrueVision has evolved into a software company as well. The company realized that it could overlay lines and depth information on the images its system produces to help guide a surgeon's knife. Because the system is 3D and can analyze shape and depth information, it can make critical suggestions such as how deep to cut, all overlaid in real time and corrected for motion during the procedure.

Nearly five years after filing papers, TrueVision received U.S. patent No. 8,784,443 B2 for its guidance system. The company said the patent broadly covers its software guidance process for astigmatism-correction surgery.

"On top of the visualization, you have to put meaningful information for the surgeon. These are very important measurements, and today they're just done by surgeon experience and guesstimation," said Forrest Fleming, CEO of TrueVision. "The idea of using a computer to gather diagnostic information from the patient and display guidance is huge."

Fleming said TrueVision believes the patent covers several products already on the market from competitors. He said the company will approach them about potential licensing deals. The patent could also make TrueVision a more appealing acquisition target, he said. "Potential acquirers look at this as a 20-year asset that can be used in their corporate strategy," Fleming said.



Pacific Coast Business Times: *TrueVision looks for growth with eye surgery system patent*

Fleming said that the company was pleasantly surprised by how broad and fundamental the eventual patent coverage turned out to be. It could be expanded to cover guidance in many kinds of surgery.

“I feel like I got hit in the back of the head with a golden brick,” Fleming said. “We were having a hard time getting it to issue, but the claims that finally issued were very, very good for us.”