



Evalan's SmartEagle Distance Sensor uses machine learning to distinguish between people and objects | Photo source Evalan

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A SOCIAL-DISTANCING SENSOR FOR WORKERS RETURNING FROM LOCKDOWN

 WORK & LIFESTYLE

A new sensor uses AI and machine learning to help people keep a safe distance from one another and prevent transmission of coronavirus

Spotted: While it may be hard to imagine in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic, one day soon, public life will start up again. Employees will go back to offices, restaurants and cinemas will reopen and children will go back to school. However, when that happens, people will still need to practice social distancing. The SmartEagle Distance Sensor hopes to help with this, by letting people know whether they are at the right distance from other people.

Developed by SmartEagle, a spin-off of the Internet of Things developer Evalan, the distance sensor uses optical sensors to measure the number of people in a room, and how far apart they are. The sensor sounds an alarm when people are closer than 1.4 metres, with options including a traffic light that turns orange or red, or a notification that appears on users' phones, to avoid a room full of ringing alarms.

The sensor uses AI and has been trained to tell the difference between people and other objects, such as coffee cups and chairs, using machine learning. Another benefit of the sensor is that no data is recorded, so a users' privacy is protected at all times.

The SmartEagle was actually developed as a part of the company's smart building solution platform. It was designed to determine whether a room was in use or not so that lighting and temperature could be automatically adjusted. However, the company has adopted this technology into the portable Distance Sensor.

The SmartEagle sensor is one of many innovations and adaptations that will be needed in order to allow people to return to work safely. At Springwise, we have already seen the development of a number of other products and services with the same goal. These include a [shopper-engagement system](#) that has been repurposed to remind people to maintain a safe distance and a hands-free door handle.

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Takeaway:

In the near future, we are going to need to adjust to an entirely new way of conducting everyday life. However, it is also likely that there are already a great many devices out there like SmartEagle's sensor, which could be adapted to new uses in the time of COVID-19. It may just be a question of thinking in new ways. In the meanwhile, Evalan and SmartEagle have found a way to help people keep a safe distance while also maintaining their privacy.