

LED carpet turns the floor into a screen

by Paul Marks

- 1 BIG-SCREEN TV not involving enough? How about a giant LED-studded carpet that transforms the floor into a vivid display? The design could let animated characters step out of your TV and whizz across the floor or guide passengers at an airport.
- 2 Announced last week, the carpet is the result of a collaboration between Dutch carpet-maker Desso of Waalwijk and display and lighting firm Philips of Eindhoven. "The trick was to engineer a carpet layer that could transmit light," says Desso's Ludwig Cammaert. Instead of the usual opaque, rubbery resin, Cammaert built a translucent plastic layer that can stand up to heavy wear and tear. This is laid on top of a 10-millimetre-thick steel screen peppered with LEDs.
- 3 The carpet could provide animated 3 on the floors of shops, theatres, and hotels, says Ed Huibers of Philips. At airports, arrows could point passengers toward their departure gate, for example. "Architects are looking into other interesting applications now, too – such as placing QR codes on the floor," he says.
- 4 It is a clever idea to turn the floor into a display, says Simon Parnall of News Digital Systems, a firm developing ways to build large tiled screens cheap enough to cover walls. "This technology could have an enormous range of uses, 3 just being the first," he says. "I am sure interactive gaming applications will soon follow. It very much fits in with the vision of ubiquitous screen technology we share."

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