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By Geoff Walker

LONG BEACH, Calif. - [QSI Corp.](#) launched its Force Panel Technology (FPT) at the [Display Week 2007 Exhibition](#) on Tuesday. This is a "new" old touch technology based on sensing the actual force exerted by a touch. Attempts to commercialize this technology have been made for more than 30 years with almost no success (other than IBM briefly in the 1990s).

QSI has solved the fundamental problems that prevented commercialization: (a) preventing the effect of off-axis forces from distorting the results of the touch-force measurement, (b) successfully analyzing complex force waveforms to determine when a touch has actually occurred, and (c) preventing over-constraint from pre-stressing the force-sensing elements. It seems as though QSI has a serious shot at successfully commercializing this technology, which would make it the eighth touch technology in the marketplace, joining analog resistive, surface capacitive, projected capacitive, infrared, surface acoustic wave, optical and bending wave.

To demonstrate the technology, QSI created a very clever demo box (see Photo). The entire box is a single touch panel. On the panel are a number of separate demonstrations of touch capabilities, including:

- Raised, textured touch-sensitive areas
- Traditional display touch screen with soft keys
- Through-panel switches
- Book-style moveable, touchable pages
- Embossed & padded removable buttons
- Embedded loudspeaker
- An embedded motor with speed controls
- Pulling as well as pushing on the panel

This demo box is quite difficult to describe. When design-oriented booth visitors saw it, you could practically see the idea wheels turning in their heads. It's such a good presentation of unconventional touch capabilities that it's really worth seeing. QSI Corp. is exhibiting at Display Week through Thursday, May 24 in Booth 1806 at the Long Beach Convention Center.



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