Press release

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Cybercom reveals bias using a social experiment

Cybercom has developed True Colors, an app intended to demonstrate that external attributes influence how people perceive each other. Cybercom wanted to use a filmed social experiment to highlight the problem of unintentional bias and the importance of diversity in the IT industry.

There are many different factors behind the low proportion of women in the IT sector. Cybercom wanted to use a filmed experiment to reveal that unintentional bias is one of these, and it developed an augmented reality (AR) app called True Colors for the test.

> "We strive to create a workplace for everyone at Cybercom. Diversity, whether in terms of gender, age, ethnicity or religion, is hugely important to us, and is critical to the continued development of our business. But we also understand that there are a number of challenging factors for the IT industry to overcome in order to achieve real diversity. One of these is unintentional bias, which is why we have chosen to highlight the problem using an experiment," says Niklas Flyborg, Cybercom's CEO.

Once the user inserts their smartphone into the headset and targets the camera at another person, that person's voice becomes distorted and their image is anonymised into a colourful chameleon. The app makes it impossible to identify or unconsciously judge a person based on how they appear or sound.

During the experiment four test subjects were asked to wear the headset. They were then positioned in front of four other people with different professions and interests, who talked about their backgrounds. At the next stage, the test subjects were asked to remove the headset and look at the people they had been listening to, before trying to pair each story with the right individual. Their guesses were mostly wrong, and the people were paired according to a more stereotypical image of their professions and interests.

> "We wanted to use True Colors and the experiment to show that anyone can judge people from the wrong preconceptions, without even being aware of it. Along with many of our industry colleagues, we are making active efforts to use various ways to highlight and change the factors that make diversity in the sector so low, particularly the proportion of women. There are many explanations, of course, not least that we need to make IT and technology more attractive to women as well as counteract prejudice and smash the glass ceiling. We hope this experiment will help to make us all think a little more," says Kristina Cato, Head of Communications at Cybercom.

Watch the experiment here**: https://youtu.be/cz_C5Wiweg0**

About Cybercom's diversity efforts:

- In 2015, the AllBright foundation recognised Cybercom as the best in the technology industry in terms of the proportion of women in leadership roles, with 36 % women in the executive team. Cybercom is working actively to attract more women to the company by participating in various training opportunities and events, most recently by sponsoring Women in Tech.

- At the end of 2016, the proportion of women employed by Cybercom was 18 %, but with a target to achieve at least as many female employees as the proportion of women graduating from the technical universities, i.e. at least 30 % in the long term.

- In order to engage girls and boys in the industry at an earlier age, Cybercom regularly invites parents and their children to learn to code and to be inspired to gain an interest and curiosity in IT and technology. Cybercom is also a principal partner to Hello World, which organises camps and meetups for children and young people throughout Sweden to be digitally creative during their weekends and school holidays.

- Cybercom has a large proportion of employees from international backgrounds, and participates in initiatives such as Talents without Boarders, Good Malmö and LinkedIn's Welcome Talent to further boost these numbers. Former UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon visited Cybercom in Stockholm following our work with labour migration.

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About Cybercom
Cybercom is an IT consulting company that enables leading companies and organisations to benefit from the opportunities of the connected world. Each individual employee is a win for us. It is our employees who drive forward Cybercom's development. Our consultants, and the solutions we create, take us all the way from public sector e-services in Sundsvall, Stockholm and Helsinki to operators and mobility in the Caribbean islands, via the UN Global Compact, driverless cars, national electronic identification, connected sewing machines and elevators. The company's areas of expertise span the entire ecosystem of communication services and security. Cybercom's domestic market is the Nordic region, and in addition the company offers global delivery capacity for local and international business. Cybercom was founded in 1995. Find out more at www.cybercom.com