

## Ready to catch the touch wave

By JON HOYLE  
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**A small touch-screen technology company is preparing to catch the wave of consumer excitement generated by the iPhone.**

Last year NextWindow of Auckland beat off global competitors to win a multimillion-dollar contract to produce optical touch-screens for Hewlett Packard's first generation of TouchSmart computers.

Chief executive Al Monroe said the company, which had previously focused on selling its technology for use in interactive digital signage, public information displays and conference and education applications such as interactive whiteboards, had been looking for a bigger slice of the consumer computer market, particularly since Apple's touch-screen iPhone began wowing the masses last year.

"What we've seen in the last year has been an incredible move toward multi-touch and that's largely been because of the iPhone," Mr Monroe said.

NextWindow's products use small optical sensors along the edge of the screen that sense where a person touches the screen and triangulates the position. This differs from most other technologies, which use coatings or films over the screen, reducing image clarity, Mr Monroe said.

He said touch-screen technology had outpaced the applications available to fully utilise it and this year he expected a large number of applications and changes to operating systems to accommodate the growing consumer appetite for touch-screens.



JOHN SELKIRK/Dominion Post  
**TOUCH, AND GO:** NextWindow chief executive Al Monroe says the company is looking to get its technology into more consumer devices, such as computer

NextWindow is one of 50 touch-screen manufacturers, including giants such as Elo and 3M.

"There were about 193 million consumer monitors manufactured last year so you don't have to have a big proportion of those moving across to touch for it to be a very significant market," Mr Monro said.

In the past year the company's staff has grown from 24 to 35 and there are plans to have five more sales staff in Asia and the United States in the coming months.