



Face-morphing machine shows similarities to Indiana U. students

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(Indiana Daily Student) (U-WIRE) BLOOMINGTON, Ind. -- Indiana University students who have ever wondered what they might look if they were a different race have a chance to find out this week.

As part of the week long Martin Luther King Jr. Day events, the Office of Diversity Education is sponsoring the Human Race Machine, which shows participants what they would look like if they were of another race. The machine is equipped to map six different races -- Asian, black, Hispanic, American Indian, Middle Eastern and white -- onto a participants' images.

"It's very interesting how you can take a picture of yourself and morph into someone of a different race," said senior Andre Grimes. "It makes you realize how alike we are."

The machine is available from 8 a.m. to 7 p.m. today and Friday and is located in the Indiana Memorial Union Gallery near Starbucks.

"It was great to see that there's such a connection and there's so little difference between us all," said Eric Love, director of diversity education.

The machine, invented by morphing-technology pioneer Nancy Burson, cost \$4,200 to bring to IU.

"Many different groups and organizations on campus pitched in money to bring it here," Love said. During the week, a few student groups, namely the Social Justice League, Theta Nu Xi and LeaderShape, have volunteered their time to show people how to use the machine, he said.

According to the Web site of Wolfman Productions, which owns the rights to the Human Race Machine, the central idea behind it is that "there is only one race, the human one. The concept of race is not genetic, but social. There is no gene for race."

The machine also has the capability to age images 20 years or produce a "couples image," which fuses photographs of two people together and generates an image of the couple's potential offspring.

Throughout the week, both individuals and classes have taken advantage of the opportunity to see themselves as someone of another ethnicity, Love said.

"We studied a little bit to prepare for MLK Day, and we noticed that this is really, in a way, honoring MLK," said Intensive English Program professor Kim Hallback, who brought a class of her international students to use the machine. "What I hope for my students to understand is that we are of one family, one race, and it's with that hope that we can see there's absolutely no real difference between us."

Among the hundreds of students who have come this week, Love said many found they don't look as different as a member of another race as they thought they would.

"This machine is a good way to unify us," said international IEP student Gloria Pedro, 18. "We have similarities that bring us together. We're all of the same blood."

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