Virtual surgery software developed

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U.S. scientists say they've developed a "virtual surgery" software tool that creates a 3-D computer image from medical scans.

The researchers at Brigham Young University say their new technology -- Live Surface -- can be utilized to instantly visualize any part of a patient's anatomy, the Salt Lake City Deseret Morning News reported Monday.

The software developers -- BYU Professor William Barrett and graduate student Chris Armstrong -- say current programs that allow physicians to look at a patient's anatomy are either too basic or take too long to be useful. But, Barrett told the Deseret Morning News, Live Surface is interactive and fast, allowing the isolation of tricky anatomy such as soft tissue, including blood vessels, hearts and muscles.

The software company Adobe Systems Corp. helped fund the research for development of Live Surface. An earlier software, developed by Barrett and his students under the name Intelligent Scissors, was renamed Magnetic Lasso and is incorporated into 5.0 Adobe PhotoShop.

BYU has applied for a patent on Live Surface, and Adobe will have non-exclusive licensing rights to the product, Barrett said.

The research was presented Monday during the International Workshop on Volume Graphics in Boston.

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