



CES 2012 - The World's Largest Consumer Technology Tradeshow

OR

Consumer Electronics, Past, Present and Future



While the consumer electronics industry as a whole seems to be struggling with profitability lately, CES 2012 set an attendance record for the 44 year old show (153,000 attendees). The show also set records for the number of exhibitors (3,100+) and the size of the exhibition space at 1.861 million square feet was the largest yet. The Consumer Electronics Association (CEA) reports that more than 20,000 new products were launched at this year's show. And while the show is larger with more people attending, it's also changing. CES, previously known as the Consumer Electronics Show; think Home & Car Audio Video products, has become so much more that it is now promoted as the Consumer *Technology* show. Companies like Kenmore, Audi, Mercedes Benz, NBC, Microsoft & Research in Motion have now replaced traditional Home Audio companies such as Yamaha, Denon and Onkyo on the main show floor. Ford even unveiled the company's first electric car at this show in 2011!

At CES not only the crowds were larger; how about one of these for your car?



So much takes place over such a large area in such a short period of time that it's impossible to review everything but here are a few of the key technology trends that emerged from this year's show in my opinion. 1) TV's were a big part of the show again this year with a number of companies introducing new technologies and most brands displaying larger and more connected models. 2) The trend from previous years of anything Apple continued. This

is interesting when you consider that Apple themselves don't exhibit at the show 3) Headphones were everywhere this year with a number of celebrities endorsing new signature line of headphones. The resurgence of this category seems to have been driven by the success of the "Monster By Dr. Dre" line. And celebrities were not just endorsing headphones, they were everywhere, in some instances they received a bigger reaction from the crowd than products/services that were revealed. 4) While the presence of aftermarket car stereo companies has been diminishing for years Mazda, BMW, Ford, Kia, Audi, Mazda and Hyundai have all booked space at the 2013 CES ensuring a strong automotive presence at the show. 5) Other returning technologies from 2011 were Appliances, Electric Cars and Digital Health Technologies.



TV's have always been a central part of this show and probably will be for years to come. 3D was the big draw in 2010 and carried forward through the 2011 show. Having failed to generate the sales and enthusiasm the manufactures were hoping for, this year the focus shifted to making larger sets at lower prices as well as introducing more Connected TV's and newer technologies.

- 1) OLED (organic light-emitting diode) looks to be the display source of the future both Sony and LG showed OLED 3D TV's at the 2012 show
- 2) Beyond HD: 4k2k or Ultra Definition was on display by a number of manufactures this year. Ultra Definition promises to be the next step forward in HD viewing
- 3) LG and Samsung both announced that voice and gesture control would be offered on 2012 televisions. Losing the remote may be a thing of the past with these technologies.
- 4) Glasses free 3d TV: glasses have always been a sticking point for the technology, this year a number of manufactures displayed glasses free models.

Could DVD and Blu-ray players be heading the way of the VCR? DVD/Blu-ray discs are being replaced by streaming and downloaded content. The future will probably be disc-free. The recent closing of the Rogers and Blockbuster Video stores would seem to strengthen this argument.

Could this be the desk of the future? Great for multitasking!



Computer technologies have been garnering their own share of the spotlight at CES for a few years now. Two years ago it was Netbook Computers and e-Readers. Last year Tablet Computers stole the show which isn't surprising when you consider that this is a product that can merge the functions of a number of technologies (PC's, Smart Phones, Book Readers, Remote Controls and TV's) all into one portable device. The rush of companies to enter this category really doesn't come as much of a surprise when you look at the sales generated by the iPad during the previous year. What is interesting to note though is that a number of companies that entered this category last year have already departed or are struggling to maintain a presence due to their lack of success in achieving consumer acceptance for their models while Apple continues to roll up significant sales with each new iPad model they introduce. This year most computers companies appear to have shifted their focus from Tablets to the Ultrabook Computer hoping for better success. Taking a page from the Apple MacBook Air companies such as Acer, Dell, HP, Lenovo Group and LG Electronics were all showing off models of the ultrathin portable computers. It would seem once more that what Apple introduces everyone else will copy with PC manufacturers trying to outdo Apple's MacBook Air not only on price, but also in performance and size. If imitation is the most sincere form of flattery, I wonder what flattery will be bestowed on Apple next.

Robotic Vacuums: As we get busier it comes as no surprise that a little help at home might come in handy. One solution to this problem; how about being able to do things like program the vacuum cleaner from your smartphone or have it sense the dimensions and layout of the room for cleaning.

Solar Everything: The more we do, the quicker our devices are liable to run out of juice. Solar power, then, is not only more eco-friendly, it can also come in handy when you don't have any other source of power at your fingertips.

E-health: Digital health products were everywhere. Gadgets that help people monitor vital signs, such as their heart rate, and keep track of their weight were abundant at CES.

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