

CES 2006, Day 2: Entertainment tech to flood consumers

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If Day 1 at the Consumer Electronics Show was all about high-definition content, then Day 2 can be described as "Hollywood gets its day," as the show was about portable media centers, mobile entertainment content and more.

At the Samsung display their new line of XM Radio-enabled cell phones had a big presence in their booth, but they also showcased their new line of portable media centers. The Nexus XMP3 Player is being touted as the first flash-based XM-enabled MP3 player on the market.

With this player you can listen to XM Radio (when docked in a cradle), record XM programming for later playback and create custom playlists with XM/MP3/WMA files. This is the "entry" level XM player, they will also have a higher end player that will have a built in antenna for true portability and will be available in March.

Samsung's portable multimedia player YM-P1 is a pocket-sized multi-

media device that will let consumers receive Terrestrial TV. The player supports a wide range of files and is JANUS enabled for music subscription services. All of this technology comes at a price, namely \$449.99 for a 20-gig machine. Also on display at Samsung's booth were flat-panel HDTV TV's and Samsung's 82-inch 1080p LCD TV. This thing was absolutely stunning, but I have to say LG Electronics had a 102-inch HDTV Plasma display that was even more amazing. Neither company has set a price on these massive sets, but rumors were floating around the show floor that they would be at minimum \$100,000.

Speaking of LG, they have moved into the portable MP3 business as well. In the 2nd quarter of the year they will be releasing several new devices, all of which will support portable video. LG's PM70 Portable Media Center is LG's first portable media center in the United States. The PM70 will have a 30GB HD and be able to record movies and television shows via TiVo's new TiVo to go service. The device has a nice, clear 4.3 inch screen. The JM53 Digital player will be an 8 Gig HD based player that will have a small screen capable of playing video.

At Creative's booth they were showcasing their new Creative Zen: M portable MP3/Video player. The player feels a little bit bigger and bulkier than the iPod Video, but the screen is fairly sharp. It looks like consumers will have wide variety of choices in the company months as it seems like everyone is lining up to take on the iPod and portable video seems to be that killer app.

Intel Corporation had an impressive display of their latest technology. On Thursday they announced two new products, one is Intel Centrino Duo mobile technology which improves performance and battery life for the fast-growing wireless laptop market segment. During a booth tour, Intel stated that they improved the power power performance on this new chipset. They hope that instead of the standard two hour battery life, that Duo enabled laptops will have five hours of battery life. They also

showcased laptops that are now truly capable of multitasking when video is running. During one demo they had an HD enable display running while the computer had multiple apps running in the background, all without affecting the main video.

The second major announcement from Intel was that it's releasing a new "Viiv" (pronounced "Vive"). They showcased some new prototype form factors, when you see them, it makes you think that the long promised PC/TV combination will finally happen. The new Viiv enabled PCs will be both traditional PC sized cases, but others will be half the size of a standard capable box, and in the shape of said cable boxes. These new brand of PC form factors will be available later this year.

Now you are probably asking yourself we have the devices, but where is all of this new "mobile" content going to come from? Well never fear, Hollywood finally sees the light and they are scrambling to get content out as quickly as possible. AOL announced a brand new AOL on demand service. But the most ambitious programs come from Stars Entertainment and ESPN.

Stars announced the launch of their brand new Vongo (www.vongo.com) service which will be an online subscription service where for \$9.99 a month consumers can have access to Stars vast library content, which will include more than 1,000 movies, their television shows and more. This is probably one of the most ambitions services by a major Hollywood entity.

ESPN teamed with Sanyo to produce an ESPN branded cell phone where it will have ESPN content practically "built into" the phone. The phone will have a robust range of content featuring everything from the latest sports scores, to custom ESPN mobile programming.

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