

Consumer Electronics Show goes spry-tech

January 14 2009, By Etan Horowitz

High-tech gadgets aimed at older people are becoming more mainstream. This year, a section of the floor at the massive International Consumer Electronics Show featured products and services aimed at seniors and older baby boomers. Young folks might enjoy these, too.

Here are four from the exhibition that closed in Las Vegas on Sunday:

_ emWave Personal Stress Reliever

This is designed to help people focus on their breathing so they can relieve stress.

To use it, place your thumb on a finger sensor that takes your pulse and then displays colorful, moving lights to help you focus your breathing. It also uses colored lights to display your emotional state, which should change from stressed to relaxed after you think positive thoughts and follow the breathing guidance.

An emWave spokeswoman suggested people with a lot of stress at work keep the \$199 device, available at emwave.com, in their office and use it a few minutes each day to change their outlook.

_ Myine Electronics Abbee Commercial-Free FM Radio

Being able to listen to your favorite songs on a portable music player is something people of all ages enjoy. But if you don't know anything about MP3s or don't want to pay for new music, it can be an intimidating task.

This \$250 home-speaker system, available in the spring, is like a TiVo for free FM radio. Simply turn the unit on, tune to your favorite stations and the gadget will records hours of songs. It comes with a portable player so you can listen to your recorded songs while you are out, and it even strips out commercials and DJ talk. There's no monthly subscription fee or per-song download price.

_ Windows 7

Microsoft's new operating system, expected to ship later this year, lets users zoom in and out on the screen by pressing a few keys. Daniel Hubbell, a Microsoft employee who focuses on accessible technology, said that although past versions of Windows let the user magnify the screen, it wasn't as easy to do, and the features were labeled in a way that may have turned some people off.

"The Control Panel in Windows XP had a wheelchair icon, it was labeled 'accessibility,' and it was very targeted toward 'Hey, you have some disability or impairment; you are special; you are different,'" Hubbell said. "In Windows 7, we're looking at actually changing the features and integrating them more into useful tools that anybody would use, rather than have some accommodation that you have to go and turn on."

_ ClarityLife C900 mobile phone

This cell phone has large buttons and large fonts, but it also has a slide-out keypad that resembles some popular phones. It amplifies incoming sound by 20 decibels, which should help people with hearing loss, and it doubles as an emergency-response device.

A button on the back of the \$270 phone calls and text-messages five preprogrammed numbers and continues to call until there is an answer. When the phone is closed, calls can be made by using four buttons. The

phone, available at Clarityproducts.com, will work on a service plan from AT&T or T-Mobile.

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