

# Hollywood, Web and gadgets a winning mix at CES

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Attendees visit the Samsung booth at the 2010 International Consumer Electronics Show, on January 7, in Las Vegas, Nevada. The premier Consumer Electronics Show (CES) which ends here Sunday rebounded from a global economic drubbing, wowing attendees with gadgets that merge 3-D, software, entertainment, and the Web.

A premier Consumer Electronics Show (CES) ended after rebounding from a global economic drubbing and wowing attendees with gadgets that merge 3-D, software, entertainment, and the Web.

"CES is back," analyst Rob Enderle of the Enderle Group in [Silicon Valley](#) said of the annual event at which electronics makers from around

the world gather to display their latest creations. The show ended on Sunday.

"Last year when I left I was thinking 'It's the last CES;' it was a morgue."

Device makers who felt the chill the fiscal crisis put on sales of consumer electronics last year poured passion and innovation into proven products and hot trends such as electronic-readers and 3-D television sets.

But "this is one of the most exciting CES events we've had in years," said Scott Steinberg, lead technology analyst for DigitalTrends.com.

"There is innovation in terms of incremental gains instead of revolutionary changes. We are seeing baby steps and hints of giant steps to come."

Two Silicon Valley titans absent from the show floor left giant footprints on the gathering of more than 2,500 exhibitors.

CES was awash in e-reader, tablet, and slate devices that in some cases seemed hurried out to get a jump on an "iSlate" that iPhone, iPod and [Macintosh computer](#) maker Apple is expected to unveil later this month.

"I think a lot of the tablet buzz was trying to get upwind of Apple," said Roger Kay, president of Massachusetts-based Endpoint Technologies Associates.

"It's kind of a game of chicken or leapfrog where you're investing or pretending to invest in the tablet area in a bid to try to claim it before someone else gets there."

A host of device makers unveiled smartphones, netbooks, or tablets

based on Google's Android software.

A [Google](#) team had the Internet star's new Nexus One smartphone available for private meetings and on display one evening at an event in a Las Vegas hotel but not on the CES show floor.

"Google was kind of the stealth company here," Enderle said. "Google Androids were in devices all over the place."

Television makers who have seen prices driven down by competition and the economy enthralled CES attendees by crafting eye-grabbing 3-D and Internet services into high-definition flat-screen models.

"We've seen a pretty dramatic shift from hardware-centric to software-centric," Gartner analyst Van Baker said of televisions unveiled at CES, which ends Sunday.

"Manufacturers are struggling with that. Increasing the value with software implies service, and it's not an easy transition for them."

Internet pioneer Yahoo! added its software "widgets" to some televisions last year at CES and built on that momentum this week with an expanded array of sets and online services.

"It won't be long before every TV is Web-connected in one shape or form, whether it's technology in the TV or through a set-top box," Enderle said.

"They're all pushing this pretty hard."

Forrester Research analyst James McQuivey said that 3-D TVs face "an uphill slog" and it is unlikely consumers will rush to buy them after many upgraded to high-definition sets in the past three years.

"I don't think we are going to be wearing those 3-D glasses at home any time soon," Steinberg said.

Growth of 3-D has been slow because of a lack of programming, the need for the special glasses and the higher prices of 3-D sets.

But last month's release of science fiction blockbuster "Avatar," a 3-D film by "Titanic" director James Cameron, has renewed interest in the medium and ESPN, Discovery and others announced plans this week to broadcast 3-D programming.

In another nod to Digital Age tastes, CES abounded with chips, controllers, and other offerings tailored to enhance videogame play as far as making experiences 3-D.

The Consumer Electronics Association that runs CES estimated that more than 120,000 people attended the event in a jump of more than 20 percent from the prior year. Final attendance figures won't be available for several months.

Gartner expects [consumer electronics](#) sales to improve along with the economy.

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