

The best gadgets from CES 2011

January 13 2011, By Gregg Ellman

After spending last week at the 2011 International Consumer Electronics Show in Las Vegas, a common question is: What was the best thing I saw at the show?

I don't know if this is the answer anyone expected, but what I enjoyed most was the announcement from Reese's of the company's new Peanut Butter Cup Minis.

The best part of the announcement was the free samples of the unwrapped Mini Cups they handed out all week.

Company officials estimated that they gave out more than 1 million samples and I'm proud to say I had a great hand in consuming more than my share.

As for the CES show itself, it was easily the year of the tablets and specifically the iPad.

Without [Apple](#) and the iPad even being present, its impact was obvious with the amount of accessories on display.

If a company wasn't selling accessories for the iPad, they were showing off their own products with an iPad or introducing a competing tablet.

Aside from the tablets, there were some other products that caught my attention for either the usefulness or the lack of usefulness - you can decide which product falls into either side.

LAUNDRY GOES HIGH-TECH

Appliance maker Whirlpool is taking the latest technology into the laundry room and displayed the new Vantage top-load washer and dryer, which have the industry's first USB port.

The USB port enables users to download specific cycles along with creating their own, based on their specific needs.

Upgrades can be loaded via the USB connection and everything is controlled on the machine's intuitive LCD touch screen interface.

Details: whirlpoolcorp.com, \$1,999

SWISS ARMY USB

Victorinox Swiss Army, which has made Victorinox USB Flash Memory devices inside the knife cases, showed some new products with incredible memory storage capacities.

The electronic additions include the Victorinox Slim, Victorinox Slim Duo and Victorinox Secure SSD.

The Slim line USB flash drives have a flying-friendly version with data storage up to 64GB. The Slim Duo line has capacities up to 128GB.

The Secure SSD is called the world's smallest 256GB solid-state drive from the company.

It features three times faster read speed and more than double write speed compared to other standard high-speed USB Flash devices.

Some of the models feature a flashlight, pocketknife, nail files and scissors.

All the drives are waterproof and shock resistant and available in blue, green, orange, pink, red or silver.

Details: swissarmy.com

CONVERT BOOKS TO DIGITAL FILES

With the explosion of e-readers in the last few years, ION, a company known for making products simple, affordable and easy to use has announced the Book Saver Book Scanner.

The scanner converts books to digital files with ease, and stores them directly onto SD memory cards. From there, the files can be transferred to an e-reader or computer.

To get this done, the scanner has two flash-equipped cameras, which take separate images of each page within an open book in rapid succession.

Books are kept in a cradle during scanning to keep the pages angled correctly in a flat, even manner.

Scanning is done at a rate of two pages per second.

Details: ionaudio.com, \$189

POCKET-SIZED CAMERA

Casio Computer Co., Ltd., showed off the cleverly designed TRYX pocket-sized digital camera.

What makes the camera stand out is its flip out three-inch rotating, swiveling touch-screen LCD.

This gives digital photographers the access to take photographs from just about any angle while still being able to see the subject on the LCD.

Users can even flip out and rotate the body away from the cameras frame to hang the camera from a hook, doorknob or other surface.

The TRYX takes still images with a 12.1 megapixel back-illuminated CMOS sensor or video recorded in full-HD, 1080 video (30fps).

Other features include an ultra wide 21mm lens, High Dynamic Range imaging and slow motion video.

Details: casio.com/products/Cameras/TRYX, available in black or white in April for \$249.99.

CLASSIC TOY REIMAGINED AS IPAD CASE

An impossible task at the CES show would have been to count how many iPad cases were available.

Despite the endless number available, the one that caught my attention

was the Etch A Sketch iPad case (\$39) from Headcase.

The popular drawing toy provides a fun flashback to the toy I used as a kid, but it doesn't end there if you download one of the many Etch A Sketch apps.

With Etch A Sketch is celebrating its 50th year and over 150 million units sold according to Headcase, they felt it was the perfect combination since the [iPad](#) has been called by many to be today's modern day Etch A Sketch.

The replica case is also available for the current models of the iPhone and iPod touch and the iPhone 3G/3GS Case for \$24.99.

Details: getaheadcase.com

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Distributed by McClatchy-Tribune Information Services.

Citation: The best gadgets from CES 2011 (2011, January 13) retrieved 19 April 2024 from <https://phys.org/news/2011-01-gadgets-ces.html>

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