

# What was hot at this year's Vegas gadget show

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A buyer tests out Motorola's Xoom tablet at the International Consumer Electronics Show, Saturday, Jan. 8, 2011 in Las Vegas. (AP Photo/Julie Jacobson)

(AP) -- Gadgets revealed at the annual International Consumer Electronics Show in Las Vegas flop more often than they pop. This year's show, however, delivered many products that are bound to make a difference for years to come.

Microsoft provided a sneak peek at a radical new version of Windows, Verizon showed the first consumer gadgets for a wireless network that's faster in many cases than wired broadband, and many manufacturers showed tablet computers with the potential to give Apple's iPad a run for

its money.

The show itself, the largest trade show in the Americas, was back in high form, after two lean years. A pre-show estimate put attendance at more than 126,000 people, and the crowds pointed to attendance well above that, but perhaps not as many as the 141,150 people that showed up in 2008.

Here are the can't miss developments from the show, which ended Sunday:

-Tablets.

Touch-screen tablet computers crowded the show, as brand names large and small showed off a slew of devices meant to compete with Apple Inc.'s iPad.

From a hardware standpoint, companies touted features that the iPad doesn't yet have, such as front- and rear-facing cameras for video chatting and taking high-definition videos and the ability to operate over wireless carriers' new and forthcoming high-speed networks, together known as 4G.

As for software, the upcoming Honeycomb version of Google Inc.'s Android software seemed a popular choice. Many of the tablets unveiled - such as the Xoom from Motorola Mobility Inc. - will run Honeycomb, which is more geared toward tablets than current versions of Android, which has its roots in smart phones and their smaller screens.

Some tablets shown will run the Microsoft Corp.'s Windows 7 PC software, though. And the business-focused 4G PlayBook, which comes from BlackBerry maker Research In Motion Inc., runs RIM's own software.

- Verizon's first consumer 4G devices.

Verizon Wireless lit up its 4G network in December, with limited coverage but unsurpassed data speeds. The network uses fresh, uncrowded spectrum and is designed from the ground up to carry data, resulting in connections that in many cases beat the speed of DSL lines and cable modems. (In the long run, with more people on the network, Verizon expects download speeds to average 5 to 12 megabits per second, comparable to non-premium cable modems.)

For now, only plug-in laptop modems can take advantage of it, but at the show, Verizon showed off smart phones from Motorola, LG Electronics Inc., HTC Corp. and Samsung Electronics Co. set to arrive in the first half of year, along with two tablets.

However, Verizon promptly stole its own thunder by inviting journalists to a second press conference on Tuesday in New York, less than a week after its big reveal in Las Vegas. It's widely believed that Verizon will announce that it will start selling Apple Inc.'s iPhone, now available in the U.S. exclusively through rival AT&T Inc. The Wall Street Journal reported on Friday that this is the case.

AT&T is building its own 4G network, and plans to have it up and running this summer. In the meantime, it indicated at the show that it's starting to call its 3G network "[4G](#)."

- Windows running on cell phone chips.

The computers looked half-finished, with exposed components, and ran what looked like plain vanilla Windows 7. Under the hood, though, these computers had components that signal a seismic shift for Microsoft and the PC industry.

Instead of running on processors from Intel Corp. or Advanced Micro Devices Inc., the mainstays of Windows PCs for three decades, these computers were running on cell-phone-style chips based on designs from ARM Holdings PLC. That could mean laptops and tablets with longer battery lives, and give Windows a better chance of gaining a foothold in the emerging world of tablet computers.

Apple Inc.'s hit iPad tablet runs on an ARM-based chip, which is part of the reason it can last 10 hours on one charge. Microsoft didn't say when an ARM-based version of Windows might be available, but indicated that it's at least a year away.

- Intel and AMD strike back.

Intel and AMD, whose processors are the "brains" of PCs, unveiled new chips with significant design changes, in part to help them hold off threats from tablets and smart phones. The idea is to make traditional, low-cost computers using their chips more competitive with the mobile devices.

The new designs promise to make computers better at doing graphics-intensive tasks and playing video. Intel and AMD are doing this by putting graphics capabilities, historically handled by a separate chip, on the same silicon as the computer's main, general-purpose processor. That means data move more quickly.

An added benefit is longer battery life, an important quality if these chips are to be competitive with those used in tablets. With the functions on the same chip, the power the parts need to talk to each other is reduced.

- 3-D TVs with cinema glasses.

Last year's big new thing in TVs, 3-D, didn't catch on as manufacturers had hoped. One problem might be the bulky, expensive, battery-powered glasses the sets need. This year, LG Electronics Inc. is trying a different take on 3-D, with light, inexpensive glasses of the kind used in movie theaters.

Vizio Inc. already sells one such set, and Samsung Electronics Co. said it was working on similar technology. In LG's and Vizio's version of the technology, the screen resolution is halved, but not everyone will notice. The flickering effect sometimes produced by the battery-powered glasses is missing, and the lighter glasses also don't darken the image as much.

- Free TV on the go.

TV broadcasters are adding signals to their towers that are designed to be picked up by portable gadgets such as small TVs, laptops and cell phones.

It's unclear how interested the public will be in this technology. An earlier attempt at broadcasting subscription-based TV signals to gadgets failed for lack of interest. But gadget makers including Audivox and LG are forging ahead, providing consumers with an array of "Mobile DTV" gadgets this year. They range from portable TV sets to plug-in antennas for the iPad.

A big obstacle for the technology is that cell phone carriers aren't interested in selling phones with Mobile DTV receivers.

- High-speed color printing.

It's not often that a new printing technology comes along. After all, both inkjet and laser printing have been with us for decades. Now, a startup

called Memjet promises a significant twist on inkjet printing. The technology allows a desktop printer to spit out one page per second in color, at low cost.

Instead of having a print head that moves back and forth across the page, it has a head that's stationary and spans the whole page. The printer should be on the U.S. market this year through an undisclosed partner, priced around \$600.

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