

# CeBIT: Gadgets galore at world's top tech fair

March 2 2011, by Richard Carter

---



Ranging from the futuristic to the ingenious to the downright pointless, the world's biggest IT expo this year showcased thousands of the latest gadgets to pull in the 350,000 visitors expected to travel to Hanover in northern Germany.

A Shakespeare-reciting robot, the world's most merciless alarm clock and "intelligent" cocktail shakers were among the gadgets wowing visitors at the CeBIT high-tech fair on Wednesday.

Ranging from the futuristic to the ingenious to the downright pointless, the world's biggest IT expo this year showcased thousands of the latest gadgets to pull in the 350,000 visitors expected to travel to Hanover in northern Germany.

No one finds it easy to wake up in the morning. But even the heaviest sleeper has found his match in the "intelligent" alarm clock designed by

students at the Technical University of Wildau in Germany.

At the appointed time, the clock communicates with the curtains in the user's bedroom, instructing them to open. Five minutes later, it turns on the bedside lamp. Five minutes after that, the radio is turned on, then an alarm.

The sleepy user can only stop this pitiless process by standing on a sensor pad beside the bed for five seconds. When the [alarm clock](#) is satisfied its master is awake, it stops the alarm and turns on the coffee machine as reward.

"It was conceived by my students who sometimes find it tricky to get out of bed for classes," explained Birgit Wilkes from the university.

"But it has a serious application. We are using similar [sensor technology](#) to monitor the homes of old people to detect if they have had a fall," she added.

Worried about hair loss? Itching to see if you have a bald patch on top of your head? Then Spec, a Hong-Kong based firm, has the product for you with its hairbrush-cum-camera with built-in magnifier.

The user simply runs the brush through his hair and a magnified image of the scalp is transmitted to a computer, which then analyses the hair density over time to judge whether the dreaded baldness is setting in.



A Shakespeare-reciting robot, the world's most merciless alarm clock and "intelligent" cocktail shakers were among the gadgets wowing visitors at the CeBIT high-tech fair on Wednesday.

For the dental-health conscious, the company has also pioneered a toothbrush with a built-in camera that shows up hard-to-reach tooth plaque and tracks how efficiently you are brushing your teeth.

And for the discerning geek, the German Centre for Artificial Intelligence has created the "intelligent" talking cocktail shaker to ensure that every White Russian or Singapore Sling is mixed and poured to perfection.

The user inputs his or her chosen cocktail and the shaker's "voice" cheerfully offers the correct recipe.

Linked wirelessly to tiny devices on bottles on the bar, it ensures no mistakes are made no matter how many drinks have been consumed and berates the budding cocktail waiter in no uncertain terms if the wrong booze is selected.

This done, it offers pointers on how best to shake the cocktail, again reacting angrily if it senses its tips are not being followed to the letter.

Other [gadgets](#) were less practical, from sunglasses with a built-in camcorder to record exactly what your eye sees, a miniature helicopter piloted by iPhone to an electronic smokeless cigarette that replicates the sensation of smoking.

But there was no doubt what stole the show: the Shakespeare-reciting, multilingual, all-singing, all-dancing sleek life-sized white robot called the "RoboThespian" who drew huge crowds with its cheeky tricks.



More than 4,200 tech firms from 70 countries are expected to attend this year's CeBIT, with many of the big names that stayed away during the global financial crisis returning to Germany. The fair is running until March 5, 2011.

From delivering the soliloquy from "Hamlet", complete with over-the-top theatrical actions, to impersonating another famous robot -- C3PO from "Star Wars" -- the charming computer quickly became the fair's star attraction.

Yours for a snip at 55,000 pounds (65,000 euros, \$90,000), the "RoboThespian" has already featured at NASA, as well as at robot museums and banks, where it acts as a tour guide-cum-greeter with a difference.

Just don't get too close. The amorous and ever-friendly robot is not afraid of trying to plant a kiss on the cheeks of anyone it senses standing nearby.

The [CeBIT](#) runs until March 5.

(c) 2011 AFP

Citation: CeBIT: Gadgets galore at world's top tech fair (2011, March 2) retrieved 18 April 2024 from <https://phys.org/news/2011-03-cebit-gadgets-galore-world-tech.html>

This document is subject to copyright. Apart from any fair dealing for the purpose of private study or research, no part may be reproduced without the written permission. The content is provided for information purposes only.