

Internet invades everything at gadget fair in Barcelona

March 4 2015, by Joseph Wilson



A worker shows a visitor the e-bike from Ford at the Mobile World Congress, the world's largest mobile phone trade show in Barcelona, Spain, Wednesday, March 4, 2015. The bikes can be connected to a Bluetooth heart-rate monitor to optimize any workout, also programmed to let you cool down during the final stretch of your exercise session. "We are in an experimental phase" said Eric Klampfl, Global Future Mobility Manager for Ford Research and Innovation Center. (AP Photo/Manu Fernandez)

The pervasive creep of the Internet from computers and phones to all

kinds of objects is the theme of this year's edition of the Mobile World Congress wireless show.

For those who couldn't join the tens of thousands in Barcelona for the four-day event, here is a look at some of the quirkiest innovations on display.

PRESTO PIZZA

Pizza Hut has two new ways to make sure nobody waits too long for a pie.

Italian inventors La Comanda have reduced the distance to your favorite pizza to a simple trip to your fridge. There, you just reach up and slap the magnet-held timing device, holding the round button down a few seconds, and presto! The pizza is on its way to you.

The Click'N'Pizza will go on sale this summer in Canada and will work to order Pizza Hut products. The price has not yet been set. CEO Carlo Brianza says the technology could be used with other chain restaurants.

Visa is also testing a program with Pizza Hut for making payments from the car. You order ahead of time, and a system of sensors will let restaurant staff know when you arrive. Employees can bring your order to your parking space, as the sensors would know where you are.

Eventually, this system could be used to pay for gas, tolls and parking. With parking, the system would know when you're in that spot and calculate to the minute how long you've been there.

Visa will start a pilot program in coming months in Northern California.

It might take years for gas stations, parking lots and tollbooths to get the necessary sensors.

EASY RIDERS

Riding a bicycle to work sounds great, until you arrive drenched in sweat.

That's one reason Ford is experimenting with improving electric bicycles.

The car company unveiled two electric bikes— one for regular city travel and one for commercial use for messengers or delivery—that connect to smartphones through Bluetooth, as well as physically via a mounted dock.

An associated smartphone application plans your route and the bike indicates when you need to turn by vibrating the right or left hand grip. If both vibrate, look out: it means a car is close behind.

The bikes can be connected to a Bluetooth heart-rate monitor that can increase the bike's motor power to let you rest if overexerted. They can also be programmed to let you cool down during the final stretch of your journey.

"We are in an experimental phase" said Eric Klampfl, Global Future Mobility Manager for Ford Research and Innovation Center. So interested cyclists will have to wait.



A woman uses an interactive electric toothbrush from Oral-B connected with a smartphone with bluetooth at the Mobile World Congress, the world's largest mobile phone trade show in Barcelona, Spain, Wednesday, March 4, 2015. (AP Photo/Manu Fernandez)

SCANNING FOR LIFE FORMS

Star Trek fans now only lack a phaser after tech company Consumer Physics has pretty much made the "tricorder" a reality.

The Israeli company says its SCiO handheld scanner can analyze the molecular makeup of any object that it has in its growing database.

It says the tiny device, which it hopes can be installed directly in a smartphone, can do the work currently limited to a spectrometer in a laboratory.

The small scanner works via a Bluetooth connection with a smartphone, which it then compares the data received from an object with a cloud-based database.

Co-founder Dror Sharon demonstrated how the SCiO identifies different kinds of fruit, the nutritional content of cheese, verifies vitamins and even distinguishes between brand, generic and counterfeit Viagra.

The SCiO can be pre-ordered online for \$250 dollars and will be on market in June.

ANTI-TAG GLASSES

Hate turning up tagged in Facebook photos?

AVG has the trick. The Internet security firm has invented a pair of glasses designed to thwart facial recognition technologies used by some social media networks to automatically identify people in uploaded photographs.

AVG spokeswoman Stephanie Kane says the company has dubbed the goggles its "Invisibility Glasses," but that they are only in the early stages of an experimental prototype.



Visitors use a glasses device at the Mobile World Congress, the world's largest mobile phone trade show in Barcelona, Spain, Wednesday, March 4, 2015. (AP Photo/Manu Fernandez)

BAD TEETH BEWARE

Brushing teeth has never been synonymous with fun.

But Oral-B has at least spiced it up a bit by making an enhanced electric toothbrush that works with an application on your smartphone.

The app times your brushing, with a graphic display showing which areas of the mouth to focus your efforts on. It warns you if you are brushing too hard.

A new version will allow you to program a plan recommended by a dentist, for example, to whiten teeth or protect damaged gums.

Already on sale in the U.S., it will be available in 56 countries in July.

The price for a perfect smile? Around \$150.



A worker uses the "mVisa" system with a smartphone as form of payment during a demonstration at the Mobile World Congress, the world's largest mobile phone trade show in Barcelona, Spain, Wednesday, March 4, 2015. (AP Photo/Manu Fernandez)

MINUSCULE MEMORY

Smartphones have become mini-movie cameras for many.

And if more memory is needed, SanDisk has crammed 200GB on a fingernail-sized SD card. SanDisk says it can hold 20 hours of HD video.

The SanDisk Ultra microSDXC UHS-I card, Premium Edition, is an upgrade on the 128GB version released last year.

To put the size of the new card in perspective, a new Mac AirBook computer has 256GB.

On sale worldwide in April, it will cost \$399.

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