

# Tech a new religion at consumer gadget extravaganza

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Tech is the new religion, offering hope of salvation in a troubled world as industry leaders converge in Las Vegas this week.

Technology will not just help us communicate better and give us bolder and brighter screens. It is promising to end urban congestion, treat cancer and depression, and help us live fitter and more productive lives.

As tech industry players large and small converge for the 2018 Consumer Electronics Show, an overriding theme is that gizmos, artificial intelligence, cloud computing, and super-fast internet connections hold answers to many if not all ills—the new religion.

One of the world's largest trade shows, CES is drawing an expected 170,000 people and 40,000 exhibitors from dozens of countries showing wares in robotics, digital health, [artificial intelligence](#), sports and more.

New cars being shown, CES participants are being told, will help the environment and reduce congestion by making transportation "smarter" with autonomy and machine learning.

People are called on to envision a world without struggles to find parking or petrol stations, instead summon self-driving cars as desired to be taxied to destinations at any time of the day.

Inside cars, the range of online offerings could be worshipped while machines tend to the tedium of traffic, which would be smoother since

vehicles would wirelessly "talk" to one another to optimize travel efficiency.

A new "intuitive and intelligent" car from Chinese startup Byton aims to tackle the billions of hours lost to traffic congestion around the world each year.

Those times lost "could be used for things which are so much more fulfilling," Henrik Wenders, vice president of Byton, said Sunday at one of the first media events at the show.

## **Digital doctoring**

Robin Raskin, who heads the CES segment called Living in Digital Times, said the advances in health and medicine in recent years has been breathtaking.

"There are new technologies to assess cancer and find out how a particular drug might respond," she said.

Startups and major firms are using new apps and technologies to tackle diabetes and depression.

One startup on Sunday unveiled eye-tracking [technology](#) to help assess autism, concussions, Parkinsons disease and other ailments.

RightEye co-founder and chief executive Adam Gross heralded the technology as "a game-changer" for the health care and sports industries due to its unprecedented ability to quickly and accurately generate "amazing insights" about health, vision and performance.

In collaboration with doctors or trainers, the information could be used to guide therapies or exercise routines.

"The potential for this technology to change people's lives around the world is incredible and really exciting," Gross said.

Technology will automate and augment the treatment of disease in the years ahead, forecast Consumer Technology Association research manager Lesley Rohrbaugh.

"You can talk with a [health care](#) provider through an app, and get remote monitoring," Rohrbaugh said while discussing [consumer electronics](#) industry trends at CES.

"You can visit your doctor without actually physically visiting them."

Virtual reality is also being incorporated into therapy, being used to treat traumas, phobias and even dementia due to aging, according to Rohrbaugh.

## **Cities smarten up**

And as the majority of the world's population takes to living in urban areas, technology is powering "[smart cities](#)" where sensors, cameras, [cloud computing](#) and more work like house elves to manage recycling, trash disposal, traffic, pollution, road repairs and other needs.

"Smart cities are where society and technology come together," Rohrbaugh said.

In the US smart cities focus on traffic, while in Europe the focuses tend to be on the environment and energy use, according to the research manager.

Inside homes, devices can make sure our water and air are clean, and we are sleeping well.

Technology is also being turned to keep us safe as we use technology.

Biometrics such as fingerprint, iris or face recognition is being built into smartphones, computers, padlocks as security features.

Meanwhile, robots are being designed to patrol oceans for fish poachers and watch after us, especially as we succumb to age.

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