

# CES preview: TVs, tablets to be major focus

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The annual Consumer Electronics Show kicks off this week in Las Vegas, and industry watchers expect the show to remain heavily focused on developments in large-screen, connected TVs as well as smaller tablet and PC-hybrid devices.

Makers of large-screen TVs will be a major presence at the show. Samsung, Sony, LG, Panasonic and Sharp will hold press events Monday to showcase their latest and coming offerings. These are expected to include more ultra-thin sets and improved software interfaces for connecting to the Internet.

Another area to watch will be so-called "ultra HD," meaning TVs that offer up to four times the screen resolution of current high-definition sets. Sony and LG have already introduced such sets, and Samsung, Sharp and other manufacturers are expected to showcase these types of products at CES, according to a report in The Wall Street Journal.

But CES has also become notable for who is not there. Apple - one of the largest and most profitable [consumer electronics](#) makers on the planet - has never been a strong presence at the event. And this year will also be the first without Microsoft acting effectively as show anchor. The software giant announced last year that it plans to hold its own events to showcase its products.

Ramon Llamas of IDC told MarketWatch that larger companies are favoring their own forums for launching their devices. Also, smartphone makers typically favor the [Mobile World](#) Congress show in Barcelona in

late February for big product launches.

"I'm seeing a lot more people looking at CES and saying that this is not the time to showcase our new flagship," Llamas said. "There's so much going on that it's easy to get drowned out."

Amazon.com and [Google Inc.](#) are two other companies with a growing presence in the [consumer electronics market](#) who don't participate at CES on a formal basis.

"While we are NOT expecting any new [blockbuster](#) products to come out of CES 2013, many vendors are likely to showcase technology advancements in ultrabooks, tablets as well as smartphones," Brian Marshall of ISI Group wrote in an email Friday.

Sarah Rotman Epps of Forrester Research told MarketWatch that CES has become a more important meeting ground between companies from different industries who are looking to step up their use of consumer technology in their businesses. Companies in the media, automotive and healthcare spaces have a growing presence at CES.

"These are companies whose core products are not technology, but feel that technology is the key to their success," she said.

Much of the visibility of the show has shifted to semiconductor companies, which make the crucial microprocessors that power a fast-growing array of smarter, connected products.

Most notable will be Qualcomm, which makes chips used in cellphones and smartphones and has become a growing player in tablets and other areas. Paul Jacobs, CEO of the San Diego-based company, has taken the opening keynote slot on Monday night that has been held for the past several years by of Microsoft CEOs Bill Gates and later Steve Ballmer.

Romit Shah of Nomura said Qualcomm "is likely to discuss its offering around mobile computing platforms." In a note to clients on Friday, he predicted the company will feature "numerous product launches" around Windows 8, a version of which is designed to run on the ARM - based mobile processors that the company makes.

But archrival Intel will also be a major player at the show. Intel is hosting a press event on Monday that is expected to focus on the company's efforts to get more of its chip products into mobile devices such as smartphones and laptops.

Intel spokesman Bill Calder said the company will also talk about the "ultrabook" category it pioneered, referring to ultrathin, Windows-based laptop computers. Another category the company plans to feature is the so-called hybrid, or "convertible" space that combines the features of a laptop and tablet.

"There is a lot of innovation going on right now between the tablet and ultrabook space," Calder told MarketWatch. "Touch is big."

Some device makers are able to piggyback on others efforts. PC makers Hewlett-Packard, Dell and Lenovo will not have major booths at the show, but are likely to have new products showcased by Intel, Qualcomm and Nvidia.

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