

The Latest at CES: Companies up 'wow' factor to stand out

January 5 2017



The Toyota Concept-i is on display at CES International Thursday, Jan. 5, 2017, in Las Vegas. (AP Photo/Jae C. Hong)

The Latest on the CES gadget show in Las Vegas (all times local):

3:30 p.m.

Companies are upping the "wow" factor trying to stand out as the CES

gadget show formally opens in Las Vegas.

Samsung, one of the largest exhibitors at the show, is offering demonstrations of its boat racing, air show and other virtual-reality experiences in chairs that move around. Hyundai is offering VR demos for people to experience what it's like to ride in an autonomous car.

Also drawing crowds are flashy concept cars like the Toyota Concept-i, with doors that flip up and a 3-D display inside.

Polaroid is showing off its Cube+ Wi-Fi camera with a bizarre display of rotating—but fake—monkeys wearing the camera. Camera images are displayed in a live feed above. It's a nod to the monkey-shaped stand that Polaroid sells for the Cube.

On the TV front, LG wowed with an OLED 4K display tunnel, which people enter to see the new technology.

One of the longer lines on the floor was at MyCharger's Power Up bar—which offered a free MyCharger along with what appeared to be green beer. It's actually regular Sam Adams in a green dye-infused cup.



A refrigerator with Family Hub 2.0 is on display during a Samsung news conference before CES International, Wednesday, Jan. 4, 2017, in Las Vegas. Family Hub 2.0 features an interface on the refrigerator with apps that can be controlled by voice recognition. (AP Photo/John Locher)

CES takes place over several, sprawling venues in Las Vegas. About 165,000 visitors are expected by the time it closes Sunday.

2:45 p.m.

Sometimes, it takes incentives to persuade people to change their habits.

Mobile payment services such as Apple Pay and Samsung Pay still aren't widely used, in part because it isn't difficult for shoppers to pull out a

plastic card at the cashier. Samsung tried to address that by offering points for each transaction, regardless of the amount spent—redeemable for gift cards and Samsung products.

At a CES panel Thursday, Samsung executive Nana Murugesan said that since the launch of Samsung Rewards in November, daily usage of Samsung Pay has nearly doubled, while the number of users who make purchases almost daily more than doubles each week.

The company hasn't specified the number of users and transactions, though analysts say it's still a small compared with cash and cards.



Hair Coach smart hairbrushes are displayed at the Withings booth during CES Unveiled before CES International, Tuesday, Jan. 3, 2017, in Las Vegas. The brush uses sensors to track hair damage and will, via a smart-phone app, offer recommendations and advice on hair care. (AP Photo/John Locher)

1:55 p.m.

Is Alexa spying on you?

It's a fair question in light of attempts by authorities investigating the slaying of an Arkansas man to obtain voice recordings collected by an Amazon Echo speaker and its Alexa digital assistant.

Yet the popularity and capabilities of voice-enabled products such as the Echo continue to grow. At the CES gadget show in Las Vegas, which opened Thursday, Whirlpool, Samsung and other manufacturers are unveiling new ways to use voice services to control laundry machines, refrigerators and other home systems.

Consumers are apparently willing to trade a certain amount of privacy for convenience.

The issue first grabbed headlines a couple of years ago, after Samsung said sensitive conversations could be captured by its voice-controlled smart TVs.



Han Chen reacts as he participates in a virtual reality presentation during an Intel news conference before CES International, Wednesday, Jan. 4, 2017, in Las Vegas. (AP Photo/John Locher)

Based on the flood of new voice-controlled gadgets headed to market, tech companies are betting that consumers will get over their fears. Comcast's Derrick Dicol likens it to people getting used to sharing their banking information online.

1 p.m.

T-Mobile says unlimited plans will be the only option for new customers even though they are more expensive than some of its old, limited plans.

The company had said in August that it was phasing out its other plans in favor of just an unlimited plan. On Thursday, T-Mobile said those limited plans won't be sold anymore starting Jan. 22. Existing customers can keep their current plans.

While some existing customers could switch over to the \$70-a-month unlimited plan and save money, others would pay more. Most customers who just pay for one or two lines or who have a lower-data plan—2 gigabytes per line—would save money by sticking to what they have.

And T-Mobile's unlimited plan isn't exactly unlimited. If the network is busy, T-Mobile may slow speeds on customers that used more than 28 gigabytes.



A show attendee stands in front of the Sony's CLEDIS display system during a news conference at CES International Wednesday, Jan. 4, 2017, in Las Vegas. (AP Photo/Jae C. Hong)

12:15 p.m.

Beauty brands L'Oreal and Kerastase want to make bad hair days a thing of the past.

The two companies teamed up with tech company Withings on a Hair Coach brush that uses a microphone, gyroscope and other sensors to monitor how fast and how hard a person is brushing.

An accompanying app recommends how to brush for optimal quality and minimal breakage and split ends. It can also take into account hair-influencing factors like heat or humidity and even discern if hair is wet or dry.

The "smart brush" has been garnering buzz at the CES tech show in Las Vegas.

Vincent Nida, worldwide general manager at Paris-based Kerastase, says one of the top beauty queries online is consistently about taking better care of your hair.



A dancer performs in front of Sony Alpha a99 II DSLR cameras during a news conference at CES International Wednesday, Jan. 4, 2017, in Las Vegas. (AP Photo/Jae C. Hong)

The battery-powered brush starts collecting data when a user begins brushing. The smarts may seem like overkill considering the price of the brush—\$200. By contrast, Amazon sells brushes for as little as \$1.

But Nida says you're getting a high-quality brush "even if you don't have batteries or you don't connect it to your cell phone."

The Hair Coach brush is due out in mid-2017.

11:05 a.m.

Who needs a keyboard? Dell is introducing a new way to interact with your computer.

The Dell Canvas 27 is a 27-inch glass surface that sits flat on a desk in front of a monitor. The touch surface is where a keyboard would normally be. Various widgets are available to manipulate items on the monitor. The Canvas also comes with a pen for sketching and creating.



A refrigerator with Family Hub 2.0 is on display during a Samsung news conference before CES International, Wednesday, Jan. 4, 2017, in Las Vegas. Family Hub 2.0 features an interface on the refrigerator with apps that can be controlled by voice recognition. (AP Photo/John Locher)

Dell envisions people using the device to edit photos and video, work on music and even work with financial tables. The goal is to replace clutter

generally found on a desk. Instead of working with paper on a desk, just use the touch surface.

The device launches in the spring and is expected to cost less than \$2,000—or around \$3,000 with the monitor included.

Lenovo has a similar concept in last fall's Yoga Book. It's a laptop that replaces the keyboard with a touch screen for both typing and doodling. But the screen is smaller, measuring 10 inches diagonally.

Dell announced the Canvas at the CES gadget show on Thursday. Tom Holland, star of "Spider-Man: Homecoming," also stopped by to introduce two Dell products—a tablet and a gaming laptop—that will appear in the movie.

10:15 a.m.

Smartphones can do almost anything, but how about molecular physics?



Models demonstrate Project Alloy all-in-one merged reality headsets during an Intel news conference before CES International, Wednesday, Jan. 4, 2017, in Las Vegas. (AP Photo/John Locher)

An Israeli startup has embedded a molecular sensor called Scio in a new smartphone that can analyze any material—whether that's the nutritional content of an apple or a person's body fat.

Consumer Physics' scanners use infrared light to analyze molecular structure. The startup has been developing them for a few years, but this is the first time it's embedded in a mobile device—one from Chinese phone manufacturer Changhong.

Is that a little too much science to carry around in your pocket?

Consumer Physics CEO Dror Sharon says knowledge is power. He explains, "When we go out and buy stuff, eat stuff, drink stuff, we think

we know what's in there, but we have no clue."

Pricing and availability for the phone will be announced Friday at the CES gadget show in Las Vegas.

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9:30 a.m.



Intel CEO Brian Krzanich holds a Project Alloy all-in-one merged reality headset during an Intel news conference before CES International, Wednesday, Jan. 4, 2017, in Las Vegas. (AP Photo/John Locher)

Apple's app store closed 2016 with 2.2 million apps, an increase of 20 percent from 2015.

Apple says New Year's Day 2017 was the biggest day ever for app store purchases—people bought nearly \$240 million of stuff in the digital marketplace.

Nintendo's "Super Mario Run" was the most downloaded app worldwide on both Christmas and New Year's Day. The app is free to download, but it costs a whopping \$10 to play the full version.

In what should surprise no one, "Pokemon Go" was the year's most popular app. The game peaked over the summer, when hordes of people prowled real-life locations to catch digital pocket monsters through its innovative augmented reality interface.

Other popular apps included Sweat With Kayla, a workout app, and Procreate, a painting and sketching app.

The milestones were announced as the CES gadget show in Las Vegas formally opened, though Apple has no official presence there.



Models demonstrate Project Alloy all-in-one merged reality headsets during an Intel news conference before CES International, Wednesday, Jan. 4, 2017, in Las Vegas. (AP Photo/John Locher)

8:20 a.m.

Intel thinks the future of virtual reality is skydiving in the desert, watching live sports from a ringside seat and cringing as zombies attack—all powered by Intel chips.

Wednesday's demo featured leather chairs, Oculus sensors and headsets—and a barf bag, signaling this was not an ordinary press conference.

One demo was a live feed from a 360-degree camera attached to a drone inspecting solar panels in a desert. Intel was showing how the technology

could be used in a work environment. A more exciting live feed showed a college basketball game between Butler and Villanova.

Travel experiences took viewers to a waterfall scene in Vietnam and a skydiving experience in the Moab Valley. A trailer for "Arizona Sunshine," a VR game, made viewers jump as zombies lunged for them. No one—noticeably—made use of the barf bags.

CEO Brian Krzanich acknowledges that some people are questioning whether VR is going anywhere. He adds, "I hope these experiences give you a taste of where it's going."

The CES gadget show in Las Vegas formally opens Thursday after two days of media previews.



Intel CEO Brian Krzanich holds a Project Alloy all-in-one merged reality headset during an Intel news conference before CES International, Wednesday,

Jan. 4, 2017, in Las Vegas. (AP Photo/John Locher)

7:10 a.m.

Amazon doesn't have an official presence at the CES gadget show in Las Vegas but its Alexa voice control software seems to be everywhere.

Whirlpool is adding Alexa voice control to its suite of smart-home appliances, including a stove and refrigerator. With that capability, someone can instruct the oven to pre-heat to 400 degrees by speaking a command to an Alexa-enabled device, such as Amazon's Echo speaker.

Jason Mathew, senior director of global connected strategy for Whirlpool, says voice is "the most natural way to interact with a product."

Other gadgets that include Alexa: Sensory and OnVocal are both launching headphones that incorporate Alexa. Simplehuman is announcing a voice-activated trash can. And GE Lighting is launching a table lamp that includes Alexa software.

Amazon has an edge on the market for now because its software has been out longer, but Google's and Apple's systems are catching up. Mathew says "Amazon is the most mature, but we expect to offer other options in the future."



Meghan Puhr participates in a virtual reality presentation during an Intel news conference before CES International, Wednesday, Jan. 4, 2017, in Las Vegas. (AP Photo/John Locher)



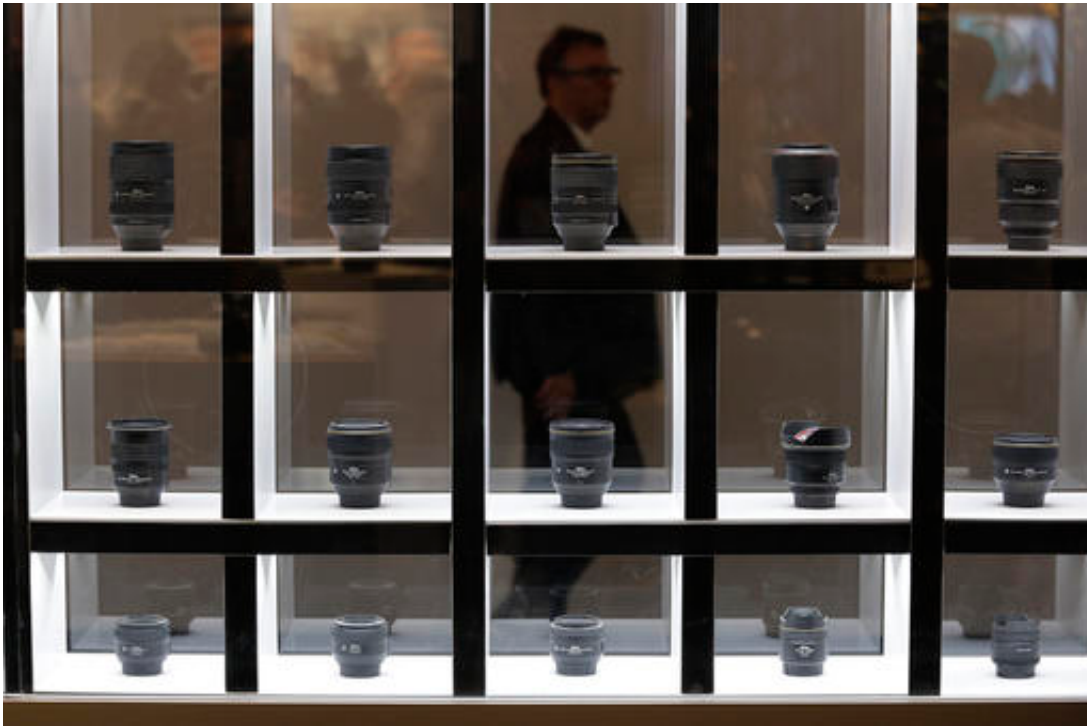
Alan Perry participates in a virtual reality presentation during an Intel news conference before CES International, Wednesday, Jan. 4, 2017, in Las Vegas. (AP Photo/John Locher)



The Hair Coach smart hairbrush is displayed at the Withings booth during CES Unveiled before CES International, Tuesday, Jan. 3, 2017, in Las Vegas. The brush uses sensors to track hair damage and will, via a smart phone app, offer recommendations and advice on hair care. (AP Photo/John Locher)



John Herrington, senior vice president of Samsung Electronics America, unveils new refrigerators with Family Hub 2.0 during a Samsung news conference before CES International, Wednesday, Jan. 4, 2017, in Las Vegas. Family Hub 2.0 features an interface on the refrigerator with apps that can be controlled by voice recognition. (AP Photo/John Locher)



Camera lenses are on display at the Nikon booth during CES International, Thursday, Jan. 5, 2017, in Las Vegas. (AP Photo/John Locher)



LG K series phones are on display at the LG booth during CES International, Thursday, Jan. 5, 2017, in Las Vegas. (AP Photo/John Locher)



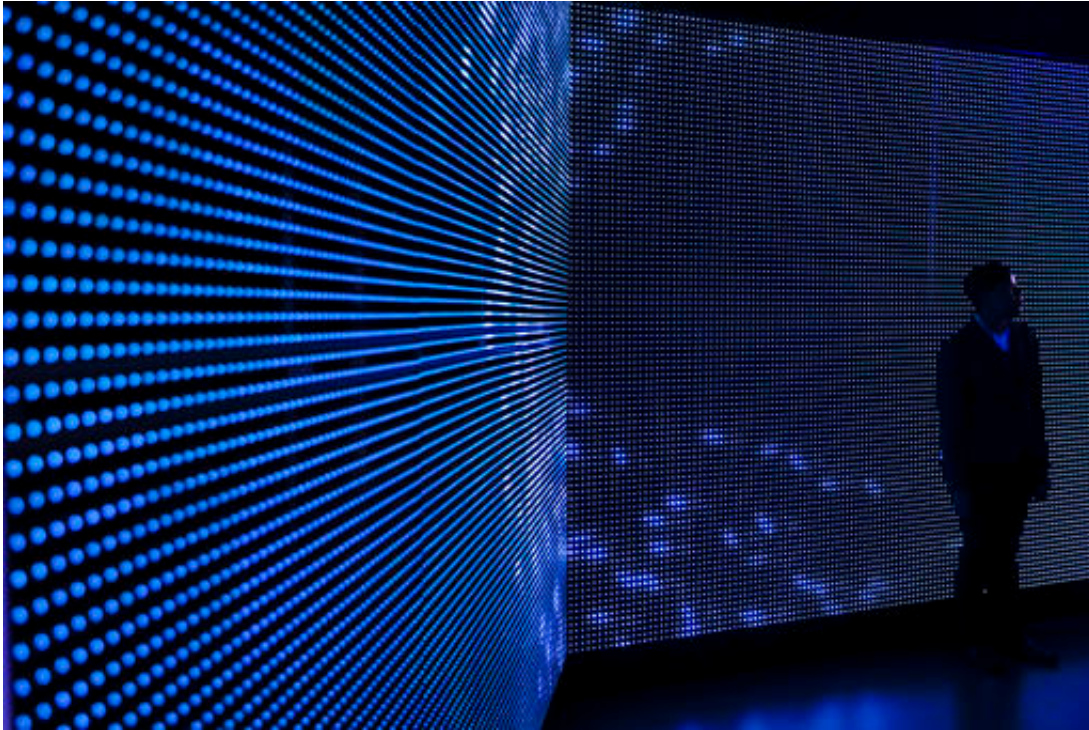
QLED TVs are on display at the TCL booth during CES International, Thursday, Jan. 5, 2017, in Las Vegas. (AP Photo/John Locher)



The Flat Top Cooker table is on display at the Panasonic booth during CES International, Thursday, Jan. 5, 2017, in Las Vegas. The prototype device is designed to cook your food when the cover is placed over it. (AP Photo/John Locher)



Mario Gonzalez talks about the interactive Wine and Sake Cellar at the Panasonic booth during CES International, Thursday, Jan. 5, 2017, in Las Vegas. (AP Photo/John Locher)



A woman is silhouetted against the wall made with small light bulbs at the Honda booth at CES International Thursday, Jan. 5, 2017, in Las Vegas. (AP Photo/Jae C. Hong)



Models sit the Honda UNI-CUB electric scooters at CES International Thursday, Jan. 5, 2017, in Las Vegas. (AP Photo/Jae C. Hong)

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