



Gadgets That Are Not Going Away

Technology advances are as certain as sunsets and winter snows. Examining them, the everyday problems they purport to solve and speculating on their significance and longevity is an engineer's passion. Here are three recently seen noteworthy advances and reasons why they'll be with us for a long time.

A few weeks ago I had the pleasure of making my inaugural visit to The International Consumer Electronics Show (CES) in Las Vegas. This is definitely not your regular trade show. Lots of impressions were made and it has taken careful reflection on the trends and technologies to identify those I think will not disappear like last year's fad, or Super Bowl commercials from Pets.com.

The CES is a sensory overload experience. Best Buy on steroids meets Universal Studios or a rock concert. It would have been quite easy to forget that I was there to work and just go from vendor to vendor hearing about their latest cool gadget. The pedestrian traffic was akin to a shopping mall on Black Friday – a level I've never seen at a trade show.

From what I'd heard from CES veterans the 2010 show featured much 3D TV. This year 3D TV was relatively sparse. I suspect that after hearing the "special eye glasses must go" the manufacturers are busy in their holographic R&D departments. We can expect 3D to come back with a vengeance in future, but without the glasses. So, what *is* noteworthy now?



1) Advanced data technology for automobiles is here. This year featured several automotive technology advances with Audi leading the way. Audi's CEO, Rupert Stadler, delivered a key note address and rejected the suggestion that drivers just need a way to connect their existing mobile devices. Mobile phones and tablets "are designed to capture a user's attention and in the automobile you want the opposite," he said. From Audi and other automobile

manufacturers, there were full-color head-up displays (HUDs) designed to present relevant navigation and safety information to the driver in their driving view. Also on display were integrated Google Earth applications for navigation. Next generation displays are integrating lane departure features to detect drifting and proximity and collision sensing advances for safety. While in-car entertainment systems have improved greatly over the years, these innovations improve safety and reduce stress from driving. Expect more of the same.

2) Smartphones will become your “life-dashboard.” Customizing browser home pages with live stock quotes, sports scores, weather and news is nothing new, nor is viewing them on a handheld internet-connected device, with Facebook, Twitter or the “app” of the day along side. What is new is selecting live information to act on that is generated or collected from your personal environment, particularly as more electronic products like home-energy meters, fire and burglar alarms, appliances and equipment are connected to the internet. As people monitor their home systems, their children’s location (from their cellphone GPS), their health vital statistics, the Smartphone will evolve to much more than a phone with a browser. People will expect status from and control of all remote devices to be routed through to their Smartphone. Technology vendors should plan that their equipment can

be remotely monitored and controlled in this way.

3) mHealth and wireless medical technology is inevitable. As the Smartphone evolves to a “life dashboard” so too will it complement this trend. In a prior article, “Healthy Wireless Waves” we discussed how wireless medical devices were evolving towards consumer electronics and how the regulatory bodies FDA and FCC promised guidance to avoid delays in this field. There was an astounding array of mobile health innovations at CES -- blood pressure and heart monitors, glucose meters, sleep therapy aids, personal pill dispensing machines, monitoring systems for seniors, and more. All these products hold promise to improve quality of life and reduce health care costs and will definitely see continued growth as the population ages and healthcare resources diminish. Growth in this field is as assured as the proverbial death and taxes. Bet the farm on this one.

As you consider these advances as either short-lived or likely to last, and wonder where your product offerings may fit in, take action and call Egret Technologies. Our work with clients is about “Turning Innovation into Profit” and we look forward to hearing from you.

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