

# engadget **distro**

2012 #24

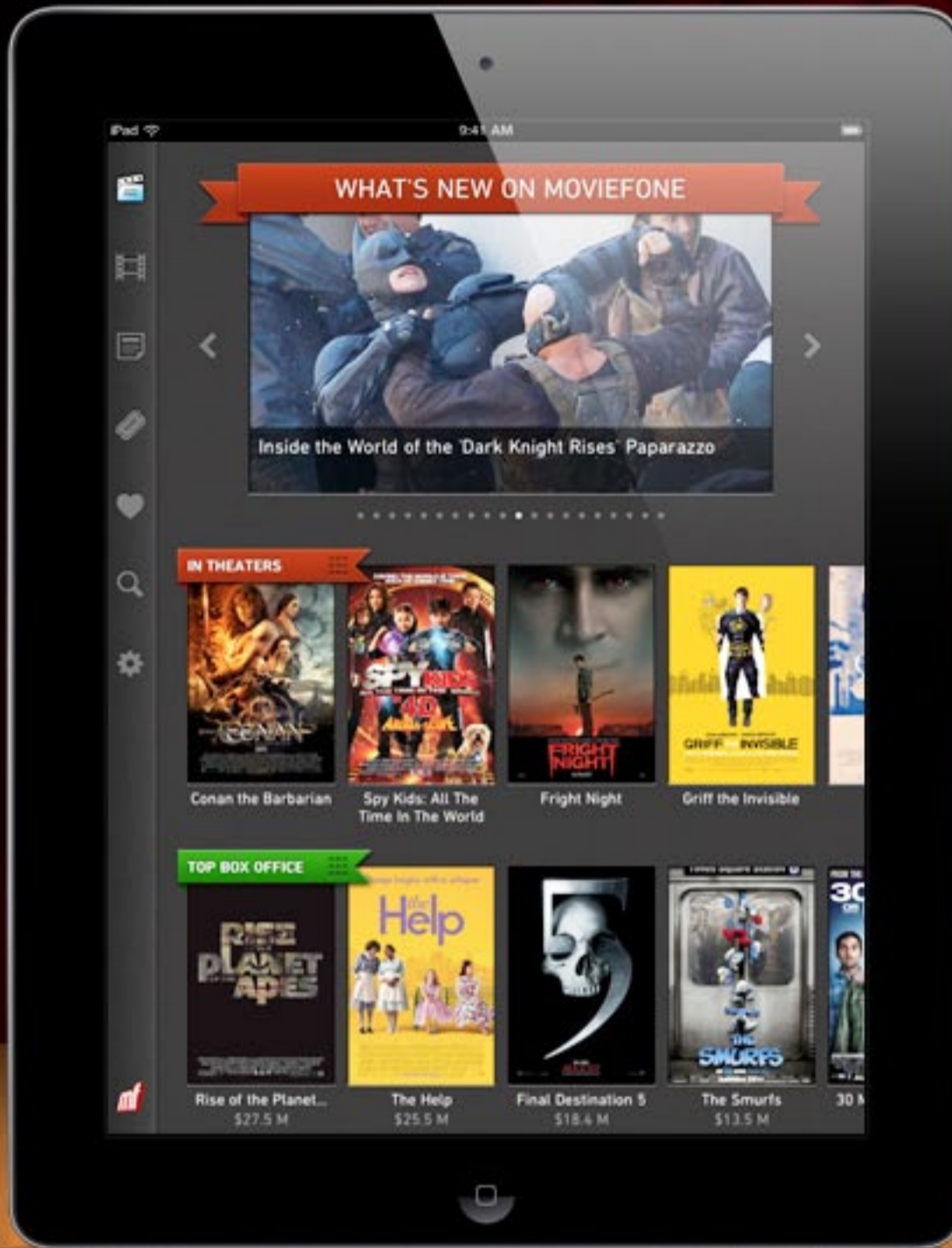
# CES 2012 ROUNDUP

TABLETS  
ULTRABOOKS  
TVs  
& MORE

We Grill OK Go's Andy Ross

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*“The tech world as a whole is still catching its breath after last week’s marathon run of announcements...”*

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#### **Inside Reddit SOPA / PIPA Meetings**

*By Box Brown*

# Apple Attacks the Textbook

*Editor's Letter*

**Technically it's been a week since the 2012 International CES came to a close. Yet, for most of us, it still feels like yesterday we were all crowded in our trailer cranking out the news with wild abandon. Maybe that's because we still haven't caught up on our sleep yet, but thankfully it was an easy week. The tech world as a whole is still catching its breath after last week's marathon run of announcements, but one company spent the days leading up to this week in preparation of a little sprint of its own.**

That company is, of course, Apple, which on a chilly New York City morning in the crowded Solomon R Guggenheim Museum announced the new version of iBooks, with some fantastic interactive and animated textbooks that are, shockingly, priced at just \$14.99. Sure, that's pricier than most content on iBooks, but a fraction of the cost of your average print textbook. Plus, with real-time updates, they'll never go out of date. That's one way to kill off used book sales...

Apple also introduced the new iTunes U, now a proper app that gives full access to online coursework — ideally



much of it contained within iBooks. You can hop straight to assignments, keep track of your homework and basically keep dibs on everything you need for your coursework in one spot. Ultimately the technology is a logical step forward, but this

sets the foundation for something truly impressive down the road as more schools and publishers jump on-board. A computer in every classroom? Been there. Now Apple wants an iPad in every bookbag.

One thing the company didn't announce is the hotly anticipated (but still somewhat dubious sounding) Apple TV. No, not the little hockey puck-style device that pumps content to your existing TV, but an actual, honest to gosh television set featuring Apple internals. Whether such a set will ever hit retail remains to be seen, but we got further indications that Google and Samsung are partnering up on something similar for the Android side of things.

Yes, there are already plenty of Google TV devices out there, but this thing is said to be a "Google TV Nexus" — a high-end, pure experience along the same lines as the recent Galaxy Nexus from Samsung. That's a rumor, but we do know that Samsung is looking

# A computer in every classroom? Been there. Now Apple wants an iPad in every bookbag.

to borrow \$1 billion to expand its facilities in Austin. No word on exactly what the company would be producing there, but chips and OLED panels are said to be on the docket. Could an American-made Nexus be next? Probably not.


The Samsung and Apple legal dispute continued this week, with Apple targeting the Galaxy S II and nine other phones in German courts with the usual patent infringement claims. Interestingly, Kodak got in the game this week with its own lawsuit against Samsung, pointing vigorously at five digital imaging patents and demanding money with one hand while, with the other, signing off on documents that would send the Kodachrome maker into Chapter 11 bankruptcy. Surely those two actions couldn't be related.

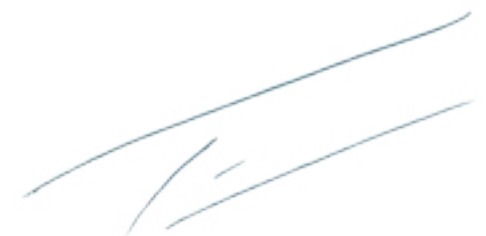
Another company receiving bad news is LightSquared, the embattled provider of LTE whose network has long been accused of doing bad things

with the nation's GPS network. The nine agencies of the National Space-Based Positioning, Navigation and Timing Executive Committee concluded that the interference is a very real, very bad thing and that there's effectively nothing LightSquared could do to mitigate it. LightSquared struck back claiming the testing was "rigged," "shrouded in secrecy" and that the whole thing was "set up to be a failure." As the tech community is wont to say, them's be fightin' words, and something tells me we haven't heard the end of this spat.

The US version of the WiFi variant of the Motorola Xoom started receiving Ice Cream Sandwich, clocking in about a week later than the Transformer Prime despite being the first tablet to sport the formerly exciting Honeycomb. The Prime, meanwhile, received an update intended to fix its GPS woes but, should you still be discontented with its locational performance,

ASUS is very kindly offering full refunds for anyone who would like one. With the 1080p TF700T slated for a summer release, we can see a few doubting early adopters taking up that particular offer.

In this week's Distro we'll be wrapping up the news from last week's CES. Flip through the pages here and you'll be up to speed on the show's hottest HDTVs, smartphones, tablets, Ultrabooks, cars and... Hello Kitty memorabilia. Ross Rubin gives his thoughts on the week that was, Andy Ross from OK Go takes a swing at our Q&A and Box Brown gives a hand-drawn look inside SOPA. It's all waiting for you in the pages that follow, so get comfortable and get to swiping. 



TIM STEVENS  
EDITOR-IN-CHIEF,  
ENGADGET

# 810

POSTS  
BY ENGADGET  
DURING CES:  
JANUARY 6TH  
TO 14TH



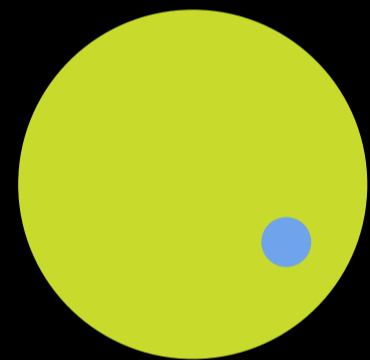
Phrase yelled 3 times, after meeting Justin Bieber:

## “Best Day of My Life!”

- 404 PHOTO GALLERIES
- 14 TOTAL PODCASTS
- 8 CLASSIC PODCASTS
- 4 HD PODCASTS
- 2 MOBILE PODCASTS
- 208 VIDEOS

# 5 HOURS

AVERAGE TIME SPENT  
**SLEEPING**, PER EDITOR  
PER 24-HOUR CYCLE.



**38** ORDERS OF  
IN-N-OUT  
FRIES AT  
THE SAME TIME



- 22 3G CARDS
- 5 WIMAX CARDS
- 40 LTE CARDS
- 2 HYPERMACS
- 25 DSLRS

**153,000**  
CES Attendees

**3,100**  
CES Exhibitors

## Engadget's Vital Stats from CES 2012

It's over, but it'll leave a lasting impression on us all. And by "lasting," we mean "eternal." It'll also go down as the most attended CES ever, with more exhibitors and more product launches than ever before. Engadget as a team hit more news than ever before, covered more hands-ons than ever before and just generally sat in awe at the sheer quantity of news that flowed from the halls of the Las Vegas Convention Center. — *Darren Murph*

*The Weekly Stat*

# CONNECTED ELECTRONICS SHOW

*Switched On*



BY ROSS RUBIN

*Ross Rubin (@rossrubin) is executive director and principal analyst of the NPD Connected Intelligence service at The NPD Group. Views expressed in Switched On are his own.*

Compared to CES 2011, which featured an explosion of tablets and high-powered smartphones poised to jump on emerging 4G networks, this year's edition of Gear and Gloating in Las Vegas was a more muted affair when it came to mobile. Sure, Verizon, AT&T and T-Mobile trotted out a few devices and there were even a few standouts, such as the Transformer Prime-esque Lenovo IdeaTab S2 with its docking keyboard as well as the heavily promoted Galaxy Note, coming soon the US after launching in Europe. ¶ To promote that device, Samsung employed caricature artists to make drawings of booth attendees (and even put them on T-shirts), which cleverly highlighted the "S Pen" that docks into the device, and used the portmanteau "phablet" to describe its pocket-packing screen, which less cleverly highlighted that it's a big phone. ¶ But the big winner of CES was in many ways the home network. Below the radar of the stunning saturation and contrast of the OLED TVs debuted at the show,

Lenovo and Samsung were also active on the TV front, with the former entering the market with an Android 4.0-based set and the latter introducing the intriguing idea of a set with an upgradeable module housing the processor.

This could overcome concerns that connected services would become obsolete long before the rest of the set would and leaves even fewer scraps for add-on set-top boxes such as those from Roku, Apple and Boxee. But there was at least one connected set-top box category that showed signs of renewed life at CES — the DVR — with new products for satellite TV customers, from Dish multi-room enthusiasts Ceton to cord-cutters from startup Simple.TV.


# Beyond the home, cellular is, of course, creeping into more than cell phones and tablets.

These will be discussed more in depth in a future Switched On.

There were even increasing signs that those laggards of embedded connectivity — cameras and camcorders — are finally mounting a more credible campaign toward integrated Wi-Fi with introductions of the Kodak M750 and Sony Bloggie Live. And for the rest, the SD Card Association has standardized a card with embedded Wi-Fi so we may be seeing more competition for the Eye-Fi card that has bridged the camera connectivity gap until now. Speaking of Wi-Fi, it is poised for a major upgrade itself as it will now span the 5GHz and 60GHz bands. The more evolutionary upgrade — 802.11ac — stands to double today's throughput while Wi-Fi at 60GHz, known as 802.11ad, will open the door to multi-gigabit data transfers at shorter range and applications such as wireless docking stations and sending multiple high-definition videos around a living room. And those who prefer to move their bits around with wires will soon have two faster options from which to choose: HomePlug AV 2, an evolution of the current dominant powerline standard, and HomeGrid,

the name for the G.hn standard.

Beyond the home, cellular is, of course, creeping into more than cell phones and tablets. Aside from AT&T trotting out more details of the cellular-enabled PS Vita and Seagate showing off an LTE version of its GoFlex Satellite, one of the more active companies here was Voxx International, better known to most by its former name Audiovox. It highlighted three Sprint-powered products at the show: Car Connection for remotely monitoring the whereabouts of vehicles, Care Connection for doing the same with kids and other dependents, and Tagg, a collar extension for keeping tabs on pets. Much like tablets today, though, these devices generally require their own cellular plans that often start at about \$15 per month.

Some discounts can kick in. For example, you can pick up Tagg service for a second pet for less. But the piling on demonstrates an increasing challenge for carriers. For connectivity on the highway to reach the same ubiquity it is reaching in the home, data access plans will need to better accommodate the needs of multiple device owners. 



# Maniac Tentacle Mindbenders:

## How ScummVM's unpaid coders kept adventure gaming alive

In the decade since its release, ScummVM has evolved from a PC emulator for LucasArts adventure games like *Monkey Island* and *Maniac Mansion* to a full-fledged platform that allows more than 300 games of the point-and-click variety to be played on a plethora of modern devices. Drawing from interviews with many of the key players behind it, *Ars Technica's* Richard Moss tells the full story of ScummVM's development and the challenges it's faced.



by Richard Moss  
*Ars Technica*

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### AROUND THE WEB

**Our Weirdness is Free**  
by Gabriella Coleman  
*Triple Canopy*



Anthropologist Gabriella Coleman has been following and researching Anonymous for years, and here provides a particularly extensive and insightful profile of the online collective for the online magazine, *Triple Canopy*.

**A Brief History of Clocks**  
by William J.H. Andrewes  
*Scientific American*



Not just a history of time-keeping devices, this piece by William J.H. Andrewes also examines how our conception of time has changed, and how more accurate time measurement has opened the door to countless new possibilities.

**Can We Build Tomorrow's Breakthroughs?**  
by David Rotman  
*Technology Review*



In this cover story for MIT's *Technology Review*, David Rotman looks at how diminished manufacturing in the United States can have an impact not just on the country's economy, but on research and innovation.

**William Gibson's Future Is Now**  
by Pagan Kennedy  
*The New York Times*



Ostensibly a book review for William Gibson's new non-fiction collection, *Distrust That Particular Flavor*, this piece by Pagan Kennedy also neatly encapsulates Gibson's ability to view, and articulate, the bits of the future that already exist around us.

*Recommended Reading*

**JUDGING FROM THE DELUGE OF NEWS  
AND ANNOUNCEMENTS THAT  
ROLLED ACROSS OUR DESKS LAST  
WEEK, IT SHOULD COME AS NO SURPRISE  
THAT CES 2012 WAS THE BIGGEST  
IN HISTORY. BUT FOR ALL THE HDTVS,  
TABLETS AND ULTRABOOKS, THERE  
WERE RELATIVELY FEW NEW DEVICES  
THAT TRULY PIQUED OUR INTEREST. TO  
GIVE YOU JUST ONE LAST OVERVIEW  
OF THE BEST FROM CES, WE'VE PULLED  
TOGETHER OUR SELECTIONS OF THE  
MOST NOTEWORTHY NEW GADGETS  
THE SHOW FLOOR HAD TO OFFER.**

**CES  
2012**

**ROUNDUP**



Aha Radio



Ford Fusion Energi Hybrid



2013 Ford Fusion



NVIDIA-powered Audi Connect

# Automotive

BY BILLY STEELE

**It's always a nice** break from ultrabooks, smartphones and massive OLED TVs to catch a glimpse of the new auto tech that will be rolling out in the months to come. This year's focus at CES was infotainment and software add-ons for a handful of manufacturers and models. Sure, the plug-in Fusion was a highlight, but for the most part, the emphasis was on on-board screens and content delivery while you're blazin' down Route 66. Read on for some highlights from the week that was.

## NVIDIA-powered Audi Connect

Audi's partnership with NVIDIA has passed the one-year mark. In that time, the Tegra chip has made it's way into the automaker's new MMX in-car system. We were able to view some of the new tech here at CES — demoed in an A7. Slated to arrive in the 2013 A3s, the Audi Connect was on display in Vegas complete with A7 / A8 MMI knob integration and a dash-mounted 7-inch LCD screen. You'll find NVIDIA's handiwork in the afore-



mentioned display that handles Google's 3D graphic renderings without breaking a sweat.

### Mercedes-Benz mbrace2

We were there when Mercedes-Benz CEO Dieter Zetsche unveiled the mbrace2. The second gen release looks to add social media to the kit via apps like Twitter, Facebook and Yelp through a smartphone connection similar to that of the Ford system. Outfitted with a central COMAND knob for menu navigation, the five-way controller

makes poking around the software a lot like using a D-pad to surf the web. You'll be able to try the tech out for yourself in the 2013 SL and in all US models in future. Also of note: mbrace2 will update itself. Dealer visits before heading into the office

## ALSO OF NOTE: MBRACE2 WILL UPDATE ITSELF.



Mercedes-Benz mbrace2





Mercedes-Benz mbrace2



NVIDIA Audi night vision



NVIDIA -powered Audi Connect




won't be needed, allowing you to hit the snooze *a few* more times.

### Aha Radio in the Subaru BRZ

Looking to get some more audio content in your whip? Aha Radio was at CES to show off some tech that will be coming to Subaru and Honda vehicles in 2013. You'll be able to tune-in to thousands of web radio stations and applications such as Slacker and MOG in addition to your regular in-car audio rotation. Of course, you'll have to download the iOS or Android app to connect to the auto's system and stream content via your phone's data connection. Don't worry about messing with a bunch of controls while driving either, as you can hop between stations and other content via steering wheel controls.

### Ford Fusion Energi Plug-in and SYNC AppLink

There were slim pickings as far as new car models go. However, Ford did show off its 2013 Fusion Energi plug-in hybrid. While not a full-on EV, it is outfitted with a number of gadget-esque features like lane departure warnings and adaptive cruise control. If you aren't looking to splurge for the plug-in model, gasoline and hybrid models will also make it to dealerships. Just know that you'll lose your chance at 100MPGe, topping both Volt and Prius of similar nature even

though it's a larger vehicle. As far as infotainment is concerned, Ford announced several upgrades for SYNC AppLink including TuneIn Radio, a Destinations update and TeleNav's Scout. 



Aha Radio

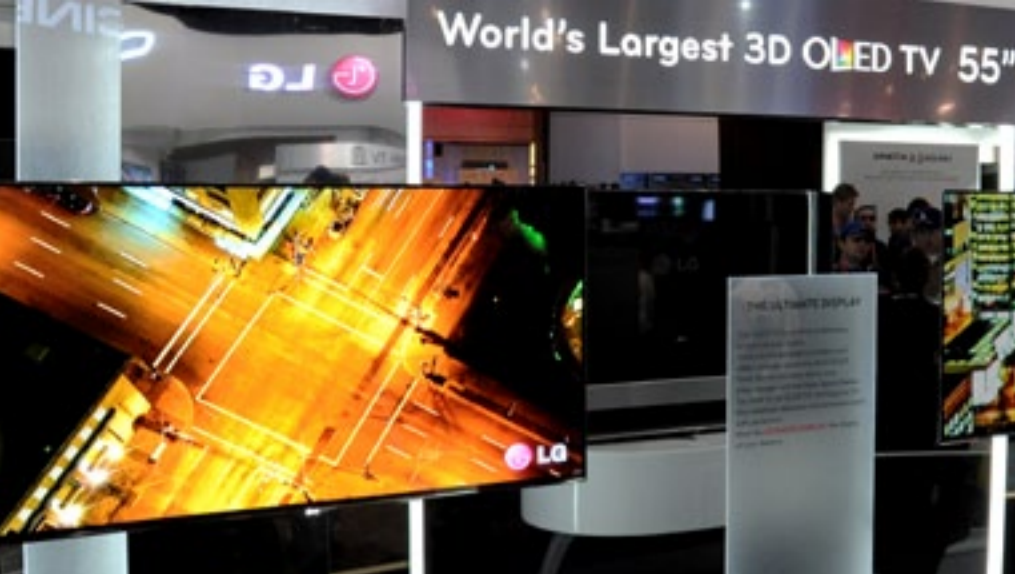


Ford Fusion

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*Billy is a Contributing Editor at Engadget, a passionate Red Sox fan, and a graphic designer by day. Usually rocks a pretty decent beard.*





LG 55-inch OLED



Vizio XTV 3D



Sharp 8K Super Hi-Vision LCD



Samsung 55-inch OLED

# HDTVs and Connected Devices

BY RICHARD LAWLER

**The Consumer** Electronics Show is always a big deal for HDTVs and the devices that plug into them, and the 2012 edition was no different. With the majority of households already owning an HDTV, manufacturers are pressed to convince you to upgrade, and are pulling out all the stops. We've got new display technologies like OLED, 4K and Super Hi-Vision, plus more 3D and internet-connected features than ever.

DVRs and media streamers haven't slowed down either, so while some services focused on eliminating the set-top box, those that remained either shrunk (Roku) or added features (Boxee, TiVo, and Ceton). The hurried pace of the announcements made it nearly impossible to keep up with everything going on last week, so we have wrapped everything up in one neat summary just for you.



## Sony

While Sony had a slimmed down lineup of LCD HDTVs to announce for 2012, most of our attention was devoted to its slick 55-inch Crystal LED prototype. With a single ultrafine LED mounted to each individual RGB color pixel it was a more than worthy competitor to the OLED displays shown off by LG and Samsung — although Sony was quick to point out at its presser that it wasn't out of that game either. Sony also brought two Google TV boxes to the show along with a redesigned remote, but may have been overshadowed in that area by the competition from LG and Vizio.

## Sharp

While Sharp's 85-inch 8K Super Hi-Vision LCD didn't make its debut at CES 2012, it was still fresh to our eyes and no less impressive as a result. With resolution that trumped any HDTV or 4K demo we saw, that demo reel will stick with us longer than anything else featured at this year's show. Another demo brought LCDs so light they could be carried around while wirelessly streaming video. We don't yet have an ideal application for this technology, but we'll think of something. As far as products that can actually be purchased, Sharp has enhanced its super-sized lineup with improved Quattron quad-pixel technology, built-in WiFi and media sharing, while adding the 3D-ready

XV-X30000 projector. Thanks to its decision to go all the way up to 80-inches, Sharp will continue to wave the bigger-is-better flag for flat-panels throughout 2012.

## AS USUAL, SAMSUNG HAD MORE DISPLAY TECHNOLOGY THAN ANYONE



## Samsung

As usual, Samsung had more display technology than anyone to show off in its massive CES 2012 press conference and booth, but we'll focus on the highlights. It featured a 55-inch Super OLED that it plans to launch later this year, as well as the three "Smart" technologies it's focusing on for HDTVs in





Samsung OLED TVs



Panasonic VT50 2012 Plasma TV



Sharp 8K Super Hi-Vision LCD



2012. Smart Interaction covers voice and gesture control, Smart Evolution promises dual-core CPUs with multitasking now and CPU upgrades in the future, while Smart Content is all about video services and apps. We got an eyeful of the apps (numbering over 1,400 now) and control at the show — processor upgrades are scheduled to be available in 2013.

### Panasonic

The plasma TV standard bearer was back and blacker than ever at CES 2012 with a new VT50 model it claims brings increased gradation for more detail in the next Batman flick, as well as DLNA and lighter, Bluetooth connected 3D glasses. Also new this year are a web browser, Touch Pad controller and updated apps. Panasonic even showed off its own super hi-res demo, squeezing a 4K x 2K panel into a 20-inch LCD that it says is the world's thinnest and smallest.

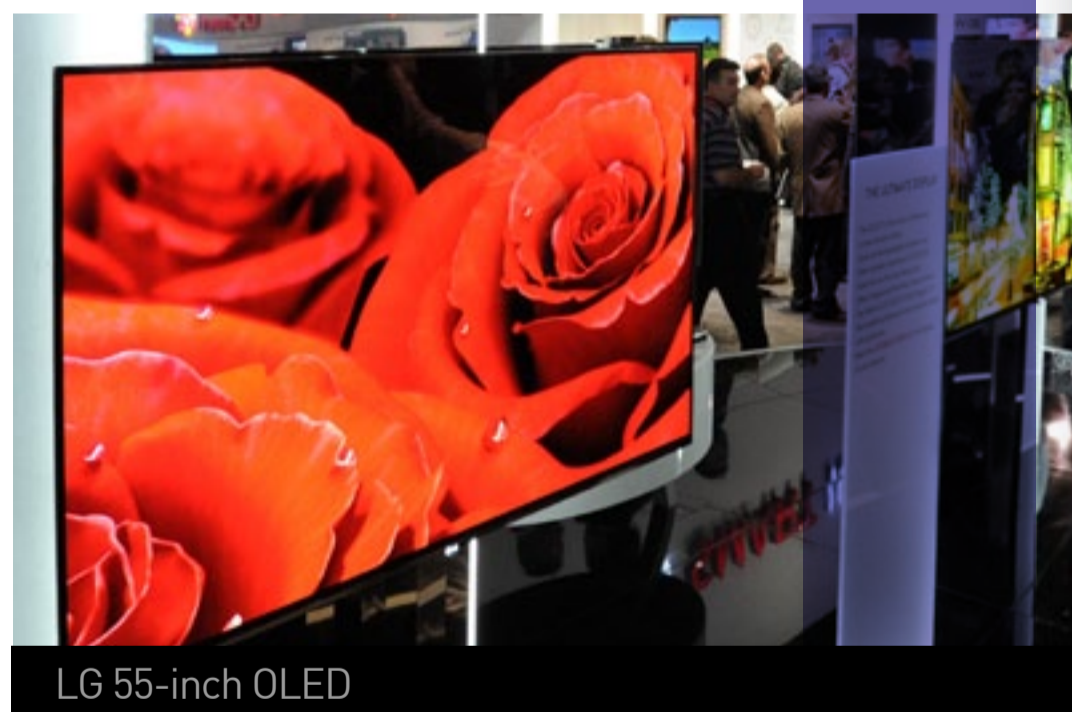
### LG

LG got many of its announcements out of the way before the show started, but that didn't make its OLED or ultra definition displays any less beautiful. Its 2012 lineup of HDTVs featured the thinnest bezels you'll find plus an upgraded gesture control remote and smart TVs with more apps. The LG Google TV entry was also notable, with a slick remote design and custom interface, while

LG also announced a partnership with Gaikai for cloud gaming.

### Toshiba

One word: Autostereoscopic. If the glasses are the only thing keeping you from loving 3D, then Toshiba



has the solution. Its 55-inch 4K LCD was back and better looking than ever, and it should come home to US viewers within the next few months. Whether your interest is high-res 2D or keeping your head






Vizio's CES Showroom

aligned properly for 3D, for a mere \$10,000 or so the privilege can be yours.

### Vizio

Last, but far from least, Vizio's CES 2012 showcase held a plethora of Google TVs, passive 3D TVs, and even a few ultrawidescreen models for the 21:9 fanboys out there. Its VAP430 set-top box should bring Google TV features for a mere \$99 soon, and along with demoing OnLive for Google TV, fit nicely in the palm of our hands. It

also had new DLNA-based media sharing technology that pulled in content from its tablets and just-announced PCs. A few delays means the product lineup closely resembles what we expected for 2011, but a focus on high tech for reasonable prices means we're just as excited as ever and the products should be launching sooner rather than later. 

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*Richard's philosophy for life is based entirely on the movie Buckaroo Banzai.*





Logic3 Ferrari headphones



Klipsch Console 2.1



Behringer iNuke Boom



Parrot Zik

# Headphones and Speakers

BY JOE POLLICINO

**Audio-wares may not be** on the forefront of many geek's minds during CES, but that doesn't mean you won't find a bevy of sound-pumping gizmos while traversing the crowded show floor. From giant AirPlay and iPod dock to premium audiophile headphones (and a bevy of dinky iDevice-compatible buds), we've picked out a few of our favorites. Whether you're focused on getting great sound or something packed with technology, read

on to visualize it all for yourself.

## Speakers and Docks

Behringer may have turned heads — and shaken floors — with its massive iNuke Boom (seen above), but Klipsch also had a giant system to show off. Dubbed the Console 2.1, this retro-looking speaker array can serve as an extremely loud centerpiece for your living room. Thanks to its construction, you'll also be able to throw some drinks on top



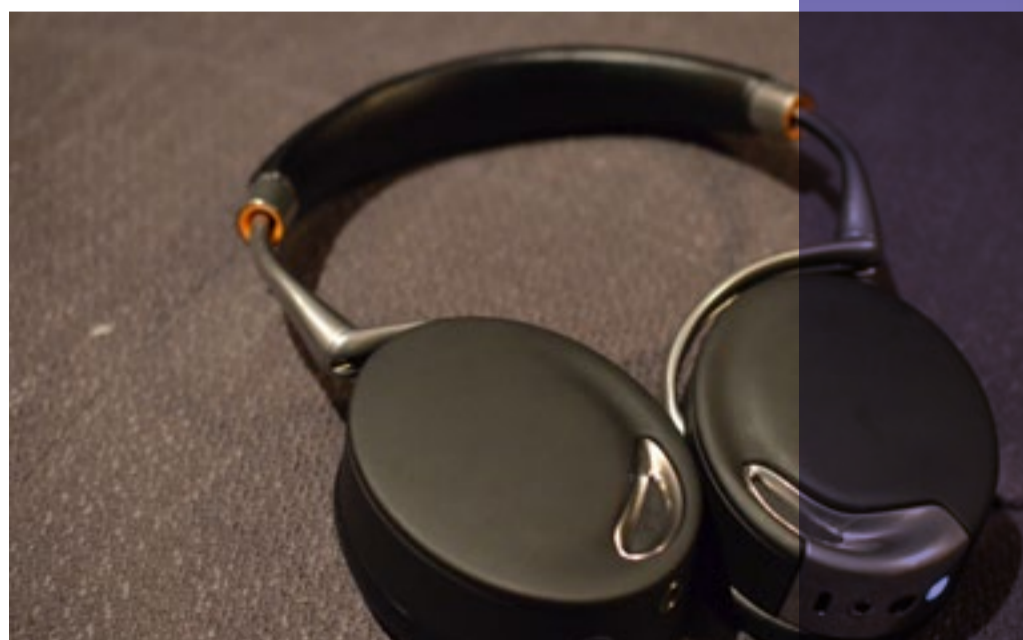
without having them tip over from vibrations. Expect to pay about \$7,000 dollars for this gigantic puppy when it hits later this year.

Of course, not everyone is looking for sound so loud that it'll rock your house's foundation, and thankfully, we also caught some smaller options. Bang & Olufsen, known for its opulent home theater systems and related gadgets, took to CES introducing its new B&O Play brand. Aiming for a "younger" crowd with money to burn, the company introduced its \$800 Beolit 12 AirPlay-enabled speaker. With a portable, picnic basket-esque and functional design (complete with a tray to hold your iPhone), the unit is sure to please those who are out and about — if they are willing to cough up the dough for it later this month, that is.

Keeping on the portable audio-dock front, we took notice of rapper Ludacris' extension out from headphones to speakers. His Soul Electronics brand hit CES with Party in a Box, a beefy and "portable" wireless speaker that can have you covered for nearly any social gathering. Featuring wireless over Bluetooth, AirPlay, and other speakers thanks to an included dongle, the festivities will be able to stream from nearly anywhere. We'd be remiss not to mention that you'll also be able to hook in a mic whenever you feel like spittin' some lyrics. Sadly, price and availability is anyone's guess at this point.

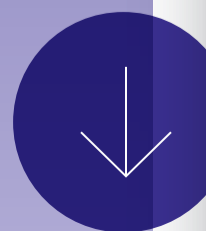
We also found a select few other pieces of interesting speaker gear, including Griffin's Twenty wireless amplifier. By plugging in your Airport Express, you'll be able to wirelessly stream audio to your favorite "noiseboxes," with 20 watts total of 2.1 sound to any speakers of your choice. AirPlay-enabled systems, meet, The Enabler. Expect it to hit some time this year for "under 200 US bones."

## NOT EVERYONE IS LOOKING FOR SOUND SO LOUD THAT IT'LL ROCK YOUR HOUSE'S FOUNDATION



Parrot Zik headset

Not to be left out in the dust, NuForce also unveiled a wireless solution, introduced to us as the Air





Klipsch Console 2.1



Bang & Olufsen Beolit 12



NuForce Air DAC



DAC. Audiophiles looking to bypass AirPlay and still get wireless to their speakers can use this dongle and connector setup to make the dream a reality. Best of all, you can bet it'll be less expensive than you'd think when it reaches shelves, in true NuForce fashion.

Then, there was LG's AirPlay-enabled speaker. It's a cube, it has built-in clock and it's wireless, need we say more?

We'll never forget TOSY's mRobo dancing speakerbot. Bieber Fever and an unfortunately placed speaker, made this unveil the greatest day of at least one Engadget editor's life.

We even peeked a number of awesome headphones while in Las Vegas. Sennheiser revealed its latest audiophile headphone the HD 700, along with its first lifestyle headset, Amperior. Folks who always craved the HD 800, but were put off by its \$1,500 price, may find the 700 more appealing with its *slightly* less spendy cost of \$1,000. We only had a quick listen to both, but Sennheiser says the HD 700 is aiming for a slightly "warmer and less-clinical" sound than its larger brethren.

That Amperior we mentioned? Imagine the company's DJ-centric HD 25 repurposed for on-the-go audio. With a lower impedance of 18-Ohms (down from 70), and inline controller / mic, Sennheiser is hoping to hit the lifestyle headset

market with some bravado when these cans launch in March for around \$350. We gave the Amperiors a quick listen ourselves, and found 'em to be very comfortable with a thick, smooth bass and a



Sennheiser HD 700



Sennheiser Amperior

vibrant high-end.

Logic3 hit CES with a full line of Ferrari-branded headphones. Clad in leather and featuring styles from racing to street-inspired, fans of boom-boom bass and *Vroom-Vroom* cars might just have an






### Soul Party in a Box

audio-match made in heaven. No word on price just yet, but you can bet they won't be cheap.

Saving the best for last — our favorite audio-ware of the show had to be Parrot's Zik Bluetooth touch-activated headset. Sure, the AR.Drone 2.0 was certainly awesome, but we found this potential gem to be noteworthy. We've seen companies in the past try to load a pair of headphones with everything but the kitchen sink, however, the Zik is the first one that may actually do it correctly. It's loaded with five microphones for calls and up to 20dB of active noise-cancellation, and even a jawbone sensor for clearing up your vocals.

There's also passive functionality if you drain its replaceable (and rechargeable battery) — not to mention an NFC sensor on the left

ear cup, and touch controls for your PMP's playlist on the right. Add it all together with a design by Philippe Starck that is as comfortable as it is gorgeous, and even an app that will allow for a more "concert-like" listening experience, and the Zik itself becomes even more compelling. We weren't lucky enough to get a good gauge of what the audio quality will be like, but hopefully, it can keep up. Expect these to hit shelves for a whole load of cash when they arrive later this year.

So, those were just some of our favorites from the massive halls of the Las Vegas Convention Center during this past CES. For now, here's to 2013! 

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*Joe's functionally useless without his glasses — a fact you really shouldn't disclose to any enemies.*






# Hello, Kitty!

BY MAT SMITH

An **electronics show** wouldn't be an electronics show without celebrity endorsements. But there was one icon who had more product tie-ins than the rest. Yep, Kitty-chan was in attendance and she had plenty of pink paraphernalia to hawk to fans of all things kawaii.

We've collated together all the gear spotted at CES and, fortunately, there was more than just a few phone cases and laptop bags. Merchandise spotted includes Kitty-themed karaoke machines, alarm clocks with mounted laser cannons, projectors and cordless phones. 





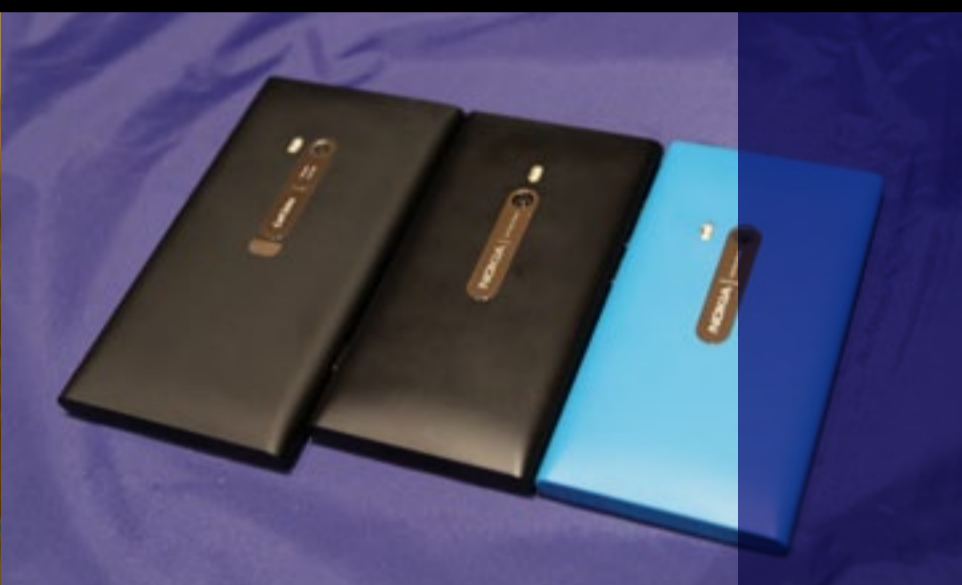
HTC Titan II



Lenovo K800



ASUS Padfone



Nokia's Lumia lineup

# Smartphones

BY JOSEPH VOLPE

**The Superbowl** of smartphones? Why, that would be Mobile World Congress in Barcelona next month. But that didn't stop the mobile industry's heavy hitters from giving us a taste of the year in wireless to come at CES. With Windows Phones finally getting LTE, Intel's Medfield CPU making its handset debut, Sony synergizing under its mega-brand umbrella and fringe manufacturers wowing attendees with stock ICS *and* super-thin profiles, it appears phone aficionados have plenty to anticipate. So, while

you sit slack-jawed in front of that tablet, let's revisit some of the highlights of this past week.

## HTC Titan II

AT&T threw a curve ball at its keynote when it announced this Titan refresh would be hitting the states with support for 4G LTE — a much welcomed first for devices running Microsoft's Mango OS. And as if access to those sweet wireless speeds wasn't enough, HTC's leapfrogged its US competition by beefing up the camera module on this



# THE 4.3-INCH P1 S AND P1 ARE NEAR IDENTICAL TWINS, SEPARATED SIMPLY BY THICKNESS

4.7-incher, bumping it to 16 megapixels with an  $f/2.6$  lens and setting a new standard for imaging on stateside handsets. Unfortunately, that signature, elegant build has gone by the wayside, replaced here by a more traditional encasing.

## Nokia Lumia 900

Its LTE-packing thunder may have been stolen by AT&T's Titan II announcement, but Nokia's high-end Lumia still managed to hit a few high marks — namely, for its 4.3-inch screen. The 900 is the first of Espoo's Mango pack to tread into large screen territory and if rumors are true, it's headed for America on AT&T sometime this spring. Inside, not much has changed, as we're still dealing with a single CPU. So, if you were holding out for a dual-core WP7.5 phone, you'll need to sit tight a bit longer.

## Huawei Ascend P1 S and P1

Things are looking up for Huawei. While brand recognition may be somewhat low for the Chinese company, its fortunes could about-face with the launch of its more premium Ascend line. The 4.3-inch P1 S and P1 are near identical twins, separated simply by thickness — the former cuts a 6.68mm profile. And both phones are loaded up with stock ICS. If you like your devices unlocked and ultra-svelte, you might want to give these a go this April.



Nokia Lumia 900

## Lenovo K800

Lenovo certainly took us by surprise when it snuck this gem onto the showroom floor. Heralding the smartphone debut of Intel's Medfield chip, the K800 is a heavily customized Android smartphone bearing 2011 specs, like a 4.5-inch





Sony Xperia ION Camera



ASUS Padfone



HTC Titan II



720p display, Gingerbread and an 8 megapixel rear camera. In fact, users not well-versed in the finer aspects of CPUs, would be hard

## IT'S A PHONE. IT'S A TABLET. IT'S A... PADPHONE?

pressed to note the 1.6GHz revolution under the hood. We've only just skimmed the surface of this Asia-only device, so stay tuned.

### ASUS Padfone

It's a phone. It's a tablet. It's a... Padfone? We've had fair warning ASUS' slatephone combo was headed to market, and plenty of time to warm to the idea. The concept? A 4.3-inch handset that neatly docks into a 10.1-inch tab, transitioning its display seamlessly to the larger screen and giving you more real estate for that ICS OS. It's an effective solution for users that don't want to port around two separate devices, and it also doesn't hurt that the dock packs an extended battery.

### Sony Xperia Ion

After swallowing Ericsson whole and dispensing with the brand,


Sony's reorganized its mobile house. And with that new face comes a new era of premium handset design. The Ion is one of two smartphones issued by the Japanese giant that features solo Sony branding, a solid build (bye, bye creaky plastic) and some very respectable specs: 4.6-inch 720p HD Reality display, AT&T LTE and a dual-core 1.5GHz CPU.

### Sony Xperia S

The Xperia S appears poised to truly wear Sony's new mobile crown. Featuring a transparent illuminat-



Sony Xperia S

ing bar, which actually functions as the antenna, this dual-core handset is what we consider to be, bar none, the apogee of CES mobile phone reveals. The 4.3-incher's not carrier-locked (yet), so fanboys and girls can get those credit cards at the ready come this March. 

*Joseph is ambiguously ethnic. He's also Associate Editor at Engadget.*





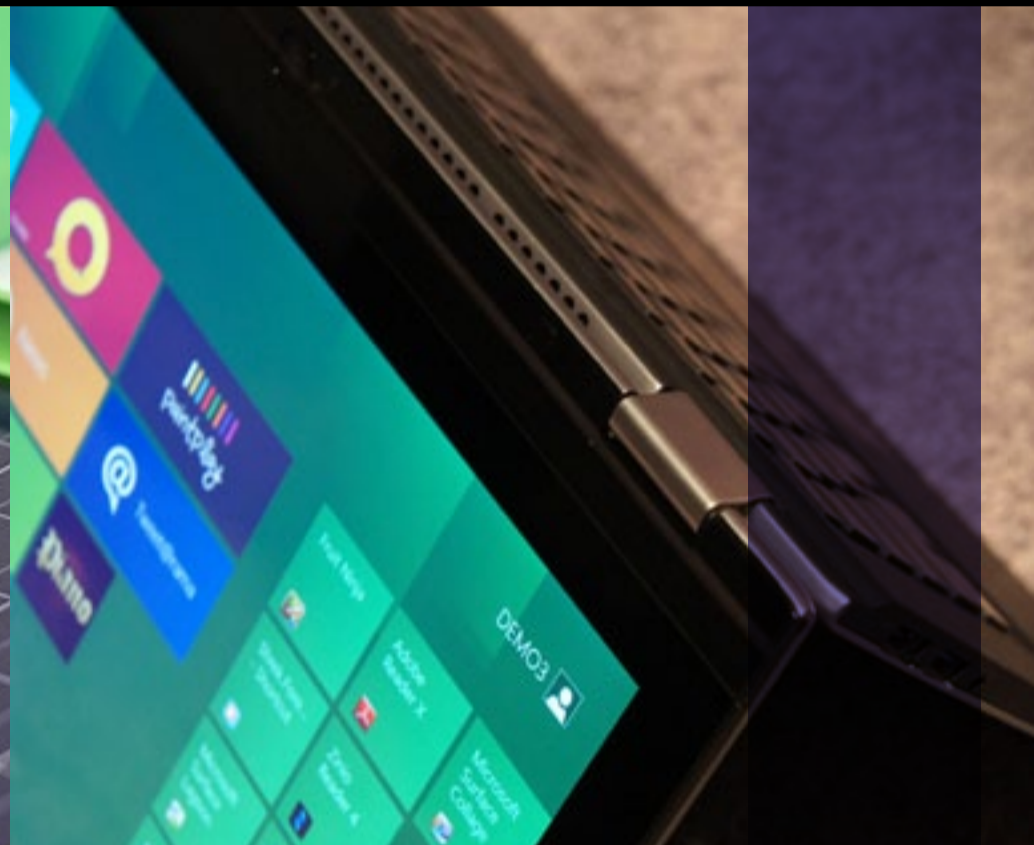
Acer Iconia Tab A700



Pantech Element



OLPC XO 3.0



Lenovo IdeaPad Yoga

CES  
2012

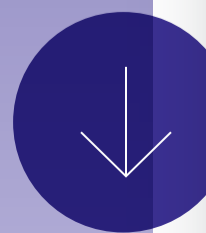
ROUNDUP

# Tablets

BY BRAD MOLEN

**Couldn't keep up** with the 600+ posts we wrote covering CES 2012 in Las Vegas? We're here to help sift the wheat from the chaff, and if you're hoping to see the best of what CES had to offer in the world of tab-

lets, you've come to the right place. As you can imagine, finding the best slate is much easier said than done, since it seemed as though nearly every major company brought a tablet in some shape, form or color.



### Acer Iconia Tab A700

Acer, without a doubt, made a huge showing at this year's show by introducing not one, not two, but three new models to its Iconia Tab lineup: the A200, A510 and one of our top choices, the A700. Why were we smitten? It has a 1.3GHz quad-core NVIDIA Tegra 3 with 1GB of RAM, its own customized — yet non-intrusive — skin laid over Ice Cream Sandwich. Oh, and let's not forget the gorgeous 1080p "IPS quality" display. Here's the catch: since the A700 is being called a "technology demo," Acer's not exactly certain that the high-end tablet will actually ever see the consumer market. Regardless, we like the direction the company's going — and even if it doesn't see the light of day, we hope Acer has something else up its sleeve to take its place.

### Transformer Prime TF700T

Just getting used to the Transformer Prime TF201? Well, it wouldn't be a true CES without at least one company one-upping itself within a month of the launch of its signature product, would it? ASUS definitely fits the bill, as frustrated TF201 users worldwide groaned when it introduced the TF700T, a new Prime that offers slightly better specs. It's a 10.1-inch device with a top-notch 1,920 x 1,200 resolution that takes advantage of a 1.3GHz quad-core Tegra 3, an 8MP rear camera with a 2MP front-facing cam, your choice



Acer Iconia Tab A510

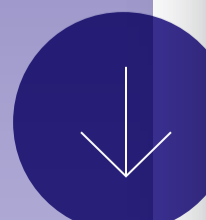


Transformer Prime TF700T

of 32GB or 64GB internal storage and Ice Cream Sandwich already loaded. The new Prime will be compatible with the same keyboard dock, so fortunately no new accessories are needed. Be on the lookout for the TF700T next quarter for a retail cost of \$599 to \$699.

### Lenovo IdeaPad Yoga

Is it a tablet or an Ultrabook? Well,





Lenovo IdeaPad Yoga

both, we suppose. Lenovo took to CES to introduce the IdeaPad Yoga, a convertible Windows 8 device that will let you switch back and forth between the two form factors depending on your situation. The 3.3-pound laptop / tablet is a bit on the heavy side, but the Yoga, with its 1600 x 900 IPS display, holds a lot of promise for \$1,000 once the OS — and device — are both ready to go later this year.

### Pantech Element

Not only did the Pantech Element become a decent and cost-effective LTE competitor to the ridiculously-priced HTC Jetstream on AT&T, it also added some benefits not found on any other tablet in the lineup. The first that comes to mind is the Element's ability to shun water better than a bad pick-up line. Dunk the tab in one meter of water, walk



Pantech Element

away for thirty minutes and it still works without issue. Add this to a medium-sized 8-inch display, 1.5GHz dual-core CPU, 6,400mAh battery and a pair of rear and front cameras at five and two megapixels, respectively, sell it with a \$300 price tag, and this tablet may have a pretty decent chance in stores come January 22nd.

### OLPC XO 3.0


The One Laptop Per Child initiative has a new tablet by the name





OLPC XO 3.0

of XO 3.0, a customizable device that starts at \$100. The main driver behind the product is its inexpensive price point, don't be expecting

to see Transformer Prime-like performance here — then again, that's not exactly the purpose of OLPC, is it? Rather, delivering a tablet that offers minimum specs of 800MHz CPU, 1,500mAh battery, 512MB of RAM, Pixel Qi display, USB ports and 4GB of NAND storage, and the specs can be customized. We feel that even though it's not a state-of-the-art tablet, XO 3.0 is worthy of a mention because of the OLPC project's overall mission. 

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*Brad is a mobile editor at Engadget, an outdoorsy guy, and a lover of eccentric New Wave and electro. Singer and beatboxer.*



OLPC Kinetic Crank Charger





Acer S5



Dell XPS 13



HP's Envy 14 Spectre



Samsung Series 9

# Ultrabooks

BY DANIEL COOPER

**CES has drawn to a close**, and the gadgets released there will be defining the market for the year. Intel is betting the farm on its Ultrabook concept as its hardware partners continue to push out the first real wave of laptops designed to take on the MacBook Air (who thought we'd be saying that four years ago?). Whatever your feelings on these devices, given Santa Clara's billion-dollar advertising push, you won't be able to ignore them this year. So, let's take a look

at five of the best products that rolled off the keynotes into the hands of our editors.

Acer's S5-shaped entry onto the Ultrabook gravy-train is a three-pound, 13.3-inch lappy that'll turn on instantly, toting a sleek onyx black magnesium-alloy cover, Thunderbolt port and an SSD for easy flinging. Improving on the design of the S3, it's the world's thinnest Ultrabook, measuring just 15mm, and feels significantly more premium. Sadly it's not all gravy: it



has a scratchy, shallow keyboard, which we're not sold on. What we do love is that the ports drop down from a motorized back cover — *Thunderbirds* fans out there will adore it just for that.

Dell's been waiting to show off how thin it could make a device and the XPS 13 didn't disappoint. The company's first Ultrabook tapers from 18 to 6mm and is made from aluminum and carbon fiber — and with the attendant weight loss. The entry-level unit's got a Core i5 CPU, 128GB SSD, 4GB RAM and a backlit keyboard. It reeks of understated quality, even though it's only \$1,000, but the port selection is pretty basic: it doesn't include an SD card slot, which we think is an unforgivable crime in the year 2012. Corporate IT buyers who need to be conscious of roaming-employees' luggage allowances: this is going to be a go-to product.

Samsung's revamped Series 9 shouldn't be on this list, because it's not an official Intel-sanctioned Ultrabook. That doesn't stop us giving it honorary status because of its extreme thinness. The company spent last year listening to user feedback from the original Series 9 and threw out everything customers hated. Gone are the soft touch finishes and launch buttons, so the dimensions are more like those belonging to a 12-inch device. The 15-inch Series 9 is also special, mostly because it's the only laptop

that thin with that large a display.

Of all the thin and light laptops named after Bond movie villains we've seen at this year's CES, it was a tough choice between the Quantum Octopussy and HP's Envy 14



Dell XPS 13




Samsung Series 9

Spectre. The latter \$1,400 computer is a “premium Ultrabook,” built from glass, weighing 3.79 pounds and rather sadly stretching the definition of “thin and light,” considering it measures 20mm. It's



a hefty chunk of laptop considering the razor-sharp thickness of some of the other machines on offer. Fortunately, HP did something with all that extra heft, including a radiance display, NFC in the palm rest, Intel Wireless

Display spanning and Beats Audio. Sadly, this device sails so close to the Intel-stipulated wind that it's essentially *just a laptop*.

Lenovo's IdeaPad Yoga is another device that isn't branded as an Ultrabook, but that's what it is: no tablet would weigh three times that of an iPad 2. The 17mm thick flip-over device can be used as a laptop, tablet or kickstand-tablet for movie watching. You'll want to watch movies on this thing, too: it's got a 1600 x 900 IPS multitouch display, unheard of in a device of this caliber. It'll retail for around \$1,000 when Windows 8 arrives, but even the prototype models scream of quality. None of these other devices ship with a touchscreen and it's cheaper than the less capable HP Envy — if we were buying one of these gadgets today, our money would be on this device. 



HP's Envy 14 Spectre



Lenovo IdeaPad Yoga

*Dana Wollman contributed to this report.*

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*Dan is a man of many words, most of which are foisted upon his unsuspecting audience on Twitter.*





OK GO'S **ANDY ROSS** RECENTLY DIPPED HIS TOES IN THE MOBILE WATERS WITH INBLOOM, AN APP DEDICATED TO FINDING SUSTAINABLE BUSINESSES NEAR YOU. HERE, HE TALKS ABOUT HIS FONDNESS FOR FATBOOTH AND HIS 2400 BAUD MODEM.

# ANDY ROSS

## Q&A

**What gadget do you depend on most?** It's hard to overstate the utility of the iPhone. When you're on tour, there is so much down-time and the iPhone really makes it possible to get stuff done (or just stay entertained) anywhere.

**Which do you look back upon most fondly?** This is a tough call between the original 8-bit Nintendo Entertainment System and my first 2400 baud modem. I'll give a slight edge to the modem since it got me hooked on trying to solve all of life's problems with a computer.

**What is your operating system of choice?** I would have answered Linux to this in my nerded-out salad days, but Mac OS X so seamlessly combines a gorgeous interface with UNIX, that you have to go with Apple (again, yeah, yeah, I know). I do tons of programming still (I was an electrical engineering major and computer science minor in college), and I've not once needed a configuration or environment that couldn't be handled on my Mac. I even had to work on a project that used Microsoft SQL Server (shudder), and I had it up

and running in Parallels in less than an hour.

**What are your favorite gadget names?** I always thought "Power-Book" was a great name for a laptop. It conveyed brain and brawn in a simple, catchy word. MacBook Pro: lame.

**What are your least favorite?** I always hated the name "Rio" of that early MP3 player by Diamond. Mostly because "Rio" conjures an image of beauty, fun and party-ing, and that device was a pathetic piece of crap.

**Which app do you depend on most?** Textmate and Xcode for desktop apps since I spend tons of time coding and I like them. For mobile apps, the GuitarToolkit app is indispensable for its tuner. I like the Kindle app a lot. And from April-October, the MLB.com At Bat app accounts for 98% of my iPhone use.

**What traits do you most deplore in a smartphone?** I get frustrated easily when errant touches launch me from the page I'm reading. I know that's my fault, but if the

# My brother had a Speak & Spell which totally blew my mind and **creeped me out** at the same time. That shit was TALKING to you!

phone is so damn smart it should know I didn't really mean to touch the screen at that point. Also, typing on the iPhone is still really annoying, in my opinion.

**Which do you most admire?** Apps! I mean, have you seen FatBooth? So funny.

**What is your idea of the perfect device?** Simple, elegant, does at least one thing perfectly, doesn't crash.

**What is your earliest gadget memory?**

ANSWER

**What technological advancement do you most admire?** We travel so much and aviation in general always blows my mind. I'm constantly amazed that flying planes actually works and that some people had the balls to try it a long time ago.

**Which do you most despise?** Whatever has resulted in the information overload that has destroyed

my attention span and made reading a long magazine article an impossibly Herculean task.

**What fault are you most tolerant of in a gadget?** I'm pretty fine with size limitations. As long as functionality is reasonably uncompromised, the utility of a gadget trumps a decent chunk of user experience for me.

**Which are you most intolerant of?** I hate hanging and crashing. If I'm being stupid or can't remember why I'm staring at my phone, fine. But if my operating system has to take a few moments to figure its shit out, I'm on the verge of mental breakdown.

**When has your smartphone been of the most help?** I've already said this, but keeping occupied on tour. It seems we're always waiting for something.


**What device do you covet most?** I'm really looking forward to the iPad with the retina display (whenever that happens). The difference between the iPhone 3GS and 4 was astonishing, and I think a screen that big with a resolution that fine

is going to be exciting.

**If you could change one thing about your phone what would it be?** Make the typing better. I don't know what the solution is, but I hope one can be found (with no disrespect to <http://damnyouautocorrect.com>, which I find hilarious).

**What does being connected mean to you?** I guess just having access to the internet. Being able to get the answer to pretty much any question or contact anyone instantly is pretty "connected."

**When are you least likely to reply to an email?** I think I should pass on this one. (Honest answer: like, always.)

**When did you last disconnect?** We just shot a new video for our song "Needing/Getting." It was definitely one of our most ambitious videos and required us to shoot in the middle of the desert. There was no internet or cell service at all and we were out there for almost a week. It was a forced disconnect and the days were long, so a little internet could've helped. 

*Q&A : Andy Ross*

# INSIDE REDDIT SOPA/PIPA MEETINGS



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- 1 HOUR AGO**: IRL: Sony NEX-C3, Garmin Forerunner 110 and the Elgato Turbo.264 HD
- 1 HOUR AGO**: iPhone 5 to have 21Mbps HSPA+ data? China Unicom says so

The main news feed consists of several articles:

- 30 MINS AGO**: **Dell confirms XPS 14z will go on sale in the US in the 'coming weeks'**. Remember that XPS 14z Dell teased at IFA? Yeah, well, it's arriving soon. As in, "the coming weeks" soon. The company just confirmed it's on the cusp of shipping here in the states, and while the outfit stopped short of giving a starting price, it's good and ready to talk specs. As we reported last month, it has the same industri...  
By Dana Wollman September 29, 2011 12:35PM
- 54 MINS AGO**: **iPhone 5 cases and realistic unibody dummy show off incredible slimness**. While we're only five days away from finding out the true appearance of the next-generation iPhone, our good friends over at BENM.AT went ahead and crafted their very own unibody dummy using CAD drawings, CNC tools and a block of aluminum -- seriously, that's how they roll! Granted, this work's only based on...  
By Richard Lai September 29, 2011 12:13PM
- 1 HOUR AGO**: **Kobo's Vox Android tablet appears online briefly, gets Canadian release date and pricing**. A day after another little-known e-reader manufacturer announced a tablet, a new Android slate from Kobo made a brief online appearance on Future Shop's site, only to be quickly taken down. According to the Canadian retailer, the FCC-approved tablet will offer up a 7-inch display with a 1024 x 600 resolution, WiF...  
By Brian Heater September 29, 2011 11:53AM
- 1 HOUR AGO**: **Iceland gets a data center to call its own, still believes in fairies**. You say Iceland, we immediately think Eyjafjallajokull -- and no, we haven't had a narcoleptic collapse upon these very keys. It's been over a year since that volcano swept the headlines and interrupted air travel, providing outsiders with a skewed

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- Engadget Podcast 09.27.2011
- Engadget Podcast 09.23.2011
- Engadget Podcast 257 09.20.2011
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