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As surely as January signals the beginning of a new year, it is also the time of year that the annual International Consumer Electronics Trade show or CES is held. To ensure that you have access to the most up to date product information, ClaimControl was there as we have been for the past 15 years to collect original product information from the more than 2700 exhibitors spread out over 1.7 million net square feet, covering 30 product categories from technologies including high-performance audio & home theater, video, home networking, in-vehicle technology, digital imaging, wireless audio, digital content creation/distribution and gaming. While early numbers indicate attendance was down approximately 22% from last year, the 110,000 people who did show up make this the largest Consumer Electronics trade show in the world.

The 2009 edition of CES featured products and technologies that will most likely shape the future of consumer electronics and I'll provide you with a quick overview of some the more promising or interesting one's. But first let's look at some of the **Cool Gadgets or those with The WOW factor.**

**3d TV:** Sony, Samsung, Panasonic, Philips and a number of other manufactures all showed 3d HDTV. While this technology has the potential to revolutionize TV viewing, it would appear to still be a number of years away from achieving mainstream market success. The goal of 3d TV is for you to no longer just watch a movie, but to immerse you in film. While the demos I experienced were compelling, the biggest pitfall with this technology in my opinion is that the majority of these products still require you to wear the glass to experience affect.

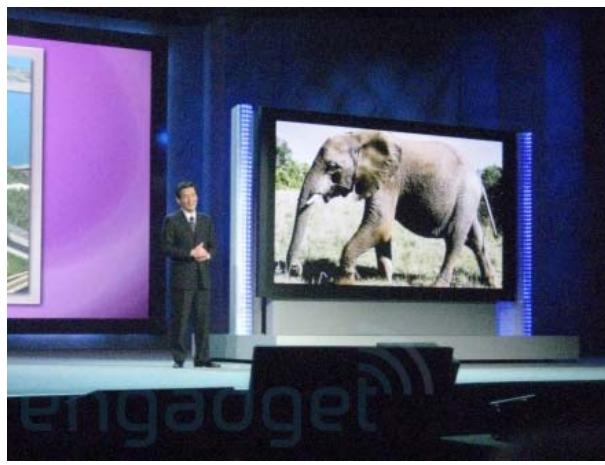
**The Watch Phone:** Straight from a 007 movie comes the new watch phone from LG. Expected to go into production sometime this summer, the watch phone looks like an ordinary watch until a call comes in, at which time the screen changes and the watch is now a touch screen phone. Just raise your hand a little closer to your mouth, press a button and you can talk into the watch. LG showed a working demo of the device at a press event and it's surprisingly slim. The phone also has a camera and 3G and Bluetooth capabilities



**Motion Chairs:** For movies and gaming. In the past these products were based on the audio bass tracks and while fun, they didn't product an entirely realistic experience. These new products are designed to work with frame-by-frame encoded material so that the motion is based upon visuals from the screen and the motion vibrations are based upon what is heard. Having had the chance to play the game simulator shown in the picture below and watch a demonstration of the movie simulator I can attest to the fact that the combined effort helps to produce a very realistic and exciting experience.



**Gesture Control:** Taking a cue from the CSI TV shows where the actors move the content on their computer screens using just their hands; Hitachi introduced a technology that's designed to replace the remote control. With Hitachi's gesture-based television, cameras are installed inside the TV and these cameras monitor your moves and follow them. The gestures are simple and the software makes it easy for the users to control the TV according to their movements. A user of the new Hitachi TV set can get the control bar with just a wave of the hand. Spin the wrist - activate scroll wheel, Swipe left or right- browse options, Two hands- switch to a different function. This made for a very compelling demo. Will it catch on or will it become the next clapper? Only time will tell.



Unlike years past where the competition was fierce for the title of largest TV, everyone seemed content to let Panasonic continue to hold that title with their enormous 150" Plasma TV. This year the size competition seemed to be focused on depth and thin was in! Most major manufacturers were showing 1" thick TV's and some were showing even thinner models. But when you talk about thin that title has to go to Sony with their 3mm thick OLED (organic light Emitting Diode) TV.



Last year Sony introduced an 11" model. This year they'll add 21" and 27" models to their line-up. OLED offers a number of advantages to current Plasma and LCD TV's, but with a price of \$2,499.00 for an 11" TV, price will be a major stumbling block for most consumers. As production increases and the technology matures prices will decrease and there will be a third horse in the race for your TV dollars.

**Some other technologies that were previewed this year:**

**Higher refresh rates:** designed to provide LCD TV's with increased picture clarity and detail for fast moving objects. Refresh rates started at 60hz; 120hz became the had to have technology in upscale models. Now 240hz is the new bench mark!

**Wireless HD transmissions:** The goal is simple. Produce a low-cost solution for wireless transmission of HD audio/video signals between source components, TVs and surround sound systems. The benefit; the elimination of spaghetti-like cabling around the room or the need to fish wires up the inside of a wall to mount your new Plasma or LCD TV!

This is a concept that is getting closer to being a mainstream reality. While a number of companies are working on or have shown demonstrations of wireless HD systems, the Wireless HD Consortium which today has 30 members, including LG, Panasonic, Samsung, Sony, Toshiba, Sharp, Hitachi, Onkyo and Pioneer demonstrated a system allowing Full HD transmissions over a distance of up to 10 meters between source components with full HDMI functionality.

**Greener Gadgets**

Over the past few years, the "green" trend has been sweeping the consumer electronics industry with products that are made to be more environmentally friendly through initiatives like less energy consumption, or the inclusion of recyclable materials. This trend was even more evident this year since "green" has become a factor in consumers purchasing decisions.

**Car Audio:**

Car Audio seemed to be more of the same this year with video and navigation driving that market. The biggest changes I noticed were the growth of integrated GPS and Bluetooth technologies into aftermarket stereos.

**Final Note or a Sign Of The Times:** U.S. consumer electronics retailer Circuit City was unsuccessful in finding a buyer, and has officially begun its liquidation process and unfortunately it looks like they will close their doors for good. Please note that The Source by Circuit City stores in Canada, which operated as a subsidiary of Circuit City, will remain open for business.

"The Canadian sales process is separate and distinct from the sales process followed by Circuit City in the U.S.," confirms a prepared statement from The Source.

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**ClaimControl**

685 Bank Street, Ottawa, Ontario K1S 3T8  
Tel: 613.233.1508 Fax: 613.233.1678  
Email: [green@claimcontrol.ca](mailto:green@claimcontrol.ca) Web Site: [www.claimcontrol.ca](http://www.claimcontrol.ca)

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