Show (CES) in Las Vegas to look specifically at computer hardware, peripherals and trends that could impact the accounting profession in the year ahead.

Roman Kepczyk • Sep. 05, 2014

Column: Technology in Practice

In consideration of the large number of tablet PCs and derivative products, the most significant business trend I noted was promoting mobile access to your data — think about reviewing your tax returns or audit reports on a tablet or smartphone while you are out of the office and when it was convenient to you. Adoption of these devices at the consumer level will get firm personnel more comfortable with working via digital images, which in turn will further drive paperless adoption. With more applications going to the "cloud" every day and data residing only in an onscreen, digital format, a tablet PC will be a very convenient way of accessing this data without having to carry a full-blown PC. While the Apple iPad started the revolution, providers such as Motorola, BlackBerry and Samsung are delivering versions more functional to business users whose primary applications are on the Microsoft platform (i.e. accounting firms).

The **Motorola Xoom** was one of the most impressive products rolled out and earned the Best Gadget of CES moniker for 2011. The Xoom is roughly the same size as the iPad, runs the next generation of the Android operating system (v 3.0-Honeycomb), has a dual-core processor, and supports Adobe Flash Player (which is one of the noted shortfalls of the iPad at the time this article was written). This product is expected to be available right after the busy season, where it will have to compete with the probable rollout of Apple's next version of the iPad, which will further heat up the discussions and awareness of these tools within firms.

For organizations already on **BlackBerry'**s smartphone platform, the vendor's **PlayBook** tablet provides an enhanced view into their smartphone and synchronizes information seamlessly, so accounting firms and other business users are sure to be early adopters. The PlayBook comes in a smaller seven-inch form factor, which is about the size of a Kindle eReader and runs its own BlackBerry Tablet OS. The other seven-inch tablet that is doing well is **Samsung's Galaxy**, which has spanned a lot of

interest across all industries because it is available through all the major

regular paper to capture your notes in a digital format that you can then import into your PC.

On the laptop front, I was impressed by **Samsung's Sliding PC 7** laptop. This device is a Windows 7 Premium PC with a slide out keyboard, so it can act as both a tablet and a netbook combining and switching between both features seamlessly. Not to be left out of the sliding PC mix, accounting industry favorite **Dell** showed off its **Inspiron Duo,** which had a cool "flip" feature that allowed the screen to flip quickly so you could use it as either a tablet or netbook (again, relying on your data and applications residing in the "cloud").

We have all said that today's smartphones are becoming as powerful as PCs, which leads to one of the most innovative designs I noticed: the **Motorola Atrix 4G.** This is an Android smartphone that can serve as the processor and communications conduit to run multiple formats depending on what it is docked to. Plug it into the back of your netbook and you have a laptop experience; plug it into your desktop dock and you have a full size keyboard and monitor; plug it into your car for satellite navigation on the way home. Once you get home, you can plug it into Motorola's HD Multimedia dock and feed movies to your TV. And then, when you are finally ready to call it a day, you can plug it into the bedside dock where it becomes your alarm clock. Oh, and by the way, it is also works as a smartphone with a fingerprint reader (for enhanced security) if you actually need to make a phone call. While most of the smartphone buzz was on Android communication devices, Microsoft pushed out its Windows 7 Phone, which finally added usable "cut and paste" capabilities that we have all become accustomed to on our desktops along with an innovative "hub" feature that allows users to quickly access their business or personal tools in their own hub areas. So it will be interesting to see if this is enough to make their phones competitive within the accounting profession.

On the subject of mobility, **Verizon** promoted its **4G LTE** network, which rolled out

world's international calling traffic and that 40 percent of those users are actually using video capabilities. The company announced a **Group Video Calling** feature that can simultaneously connect up to 10 video sessions for one $8.99/month fee, which should definitely be of interest to firms, even if just for training and multi-office partner discussions.

A number of other "innovative" devices got my attention, if only to make us all think about what could be feasible. **Acer** demonstrated its **Iconia Windows 7** laptop, but instead of a keyboard there was a second *14-inch screen* on the bottom that could be used for images or a digital keyboard! **Microsoft** demonstrated its new **Surface 2.0** computing platform, which I believe is a precursor to "paperless" conference room tables where we can interact freely with digital files "on the desktop." This device is now a 4-inch thick table top instead of the old video box console in the first version. While there is not much new in all-in-one printing devices, **Lexmark** had an innovative form factor with its futuristic looking **Genesis** device, which they referred to as "Now in One" as it was a wireless connection with very fast imaging times. Well, that wraps up my Gadget lineup for 2010; I hope you had a wonderful busy season!

Roman H. Kepczyk, CPA.CITP is president of InfoTech Partners North America, Inc. and works exclusively with CPA firms to implement today's leading best practices and technologies. Roman authored "Quantum of Paperless, a Partner's Guide to Accounting Firm Optimization" which is available at Amazon.com.

Firm Management • Technology

CPA Practice Advisor is registered with the National Association of State Boards of Accountancy

Hello. It looks like you're using an ad blocker that may prevent our website from working properly. To receive the best experience possible, please make sure any blockers are switched off and refresh the page.

If you have any questions or need help you can email us