Roman Kepczyk • Feb. 27, 2013

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The 2013 Consumer Electronics Show (CES) was the largest in their 45 year history with more than 3,300 vendors and 150,000 attendees traipsing across 1.92 million square feet of Las Vegas show floors. To give you an idea of scale, that's over 33 football fields in size, crisscrossed by 23 miles of aisles.

While many of the announcements and products focused on home or automotive

importantly "cost effective" alternative, particularly in cubicle areas where shelving has limited the ability of firms to "stack" monitors.

In addition to the PC connected screens, users will continue to pull up additional information on their tablets or smartphones which are becoming part of a natural "second screen" movement.

Second Screen Concept: Most consumers are finding that having a tablet or smart phone available when viewing television programming is a valuable "second screen" that they can use to find out more about a story or event that is happening on the television. This realization has spawned a lot of interest for developers that create applications which interact "live" between the handheld device and the television to provide additional information or sell related products, which were touted at CES's Second Screen Summit.

These connected applications could someday allow accountants to pull up a client's tax return on a large screen within their office and then have supplemental information delivered to their tablet during the discussion, including what information is displayed or kept private. Since we are on the subject of tablets, Lenovo displayed their 27" Horizon Table PC that converts from an all in one touch screen PC to a hefty tablet with a screen large enough to be shared simultaneously with a handful of users which could direct a path towards a truly paperless office.

Third Screen: Viewing data on a smart phone is not always a great experience, particularly when the user needs to interact with the device. While rumors of the eminent release of Google's Project Glass wireless handset technology have abounded during the past year, the Lumix M100 Smart Glasses were delivered at CES and received a Best of Innovations award. This small screen is mounted over the ear so the image can be viewed hands free and integrates GPS and head tracker technology to interact with applications.

Imagine working in the field and having the third screen to display additional or

featured Microsoft Windows Phone. In addition to that working "reference" device, Samsung showed a video of a tablet concept device that folded in half to be more portable, and then held up another where the screen was "bent" over the side to display a single line of information.

This bend allowed one line of text to be viewed when the phone was closed to show a caller ID, text message, appointment reminder, or the first line of an inbound email. Flexible technology will allow screens to take abuses that would damage most screens, as well as be able to put screens and information in places never possible before.

Boosted Cameras: On the personal front, two of the most interesting devices were cameras beginning with the Samsung Galaxy Camera, which combines a camera and Android tablet, …and yes, it connects with a digital cellular data plan. This 16 megapixel camera has an optical 21x zoom lens and allows users to take pictures and have them automatically uploaded to the cloud for storage so users won't need to worry about running out of space on the local device or losing images if the camera is lost or breaks.

This camera comes with special picture settings that let novices take expert images and also combine the "best faces" from multiple shots to create the best composite image. It's somewhat of a stretch but think about auditors doing an inventory observation and capturing data and sending it directly up to the cloud for archival.

The second camera to Wow us was an updated Parrot AR Drone which is a remote controlled quadrotor helicopter with an onboard camera that displays the image on and is controlled by an Android or iOS devices so you can see the view from the camera on the drone from about 60 yards away. We are sure the aerial viewing capabilities will make privacy pundits cringe as the $300 price makes them available to any consumer.

Mobile Internet Bandwidth Optimization: By now, most firms have transitioned

Sports Watch.

This could then lead to a counter-trend of over utilization that limits availability of bandwidth for users and a counter-counter trend to offload to other bandwidth. The conceptual solution would be a dynamic hand-off from the 4G to a local WiFi when the user moves within range of a friendly WiFi device so the traffic would be automatically off loaded from the 4G systems to a WiFi device with a physical fiber or cable connection.

WiFi Scanning: Fujitsu ScanSnap scanners have been one of the staple tools in the accountant's arsenal for capturing tax documents at the desktop or helping auditors in the field scan files in lieu of bringing them back into the office. This year's refresh comes in the form of the iX500 which has built in WiFi capabilities to send scanned images directly to the auditor's iPhone or Android device in addition to their PC making them easier than ever to capture and confirming for almost any need "there's an App for that!"

Natural User Interface (NUI): Apple has done an epic job of introducing accountants to using touch screens to interact with digital tools, but this is only the beginning to NUI tools that are evolving to utilize motion and even neural input. One product demonstration touted Microsoft's Kinect for Windows applications that would allow users to pull down menus and make selections with hand motions in front of the screen and another product called Tobii Gaze did so by tracking eye movements.

Imagine looking at a part of a tax return and having it magnified based on where you are looking, which is much faster and less clumsy than using a mouse. Where does NUI go from here? How about "thinking" a command to make it happen, which is precisely what the Emotive EPOC headset demonstrated. The Emotive device learns to "tune-in" to signals the brain gives when experiencing emotions or making facial expressions and is already being used in gaming applications.

Once these technologies are harnessed, accountants will be able to use thought and

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