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**Randy Johnston** • Mar. 13, 2015



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Many consultants to the profession attend the annual Consumer Electronic Show (CES) to look for the latest gadget and gizmo for themselves and their clients. The 2015 version of the show did not have sufficient reporting on useful business tools for the accounting profession, although there was frantic reporting on other consumer electronics.

The 8K glassless 3D television units were magnificent to see, but until content is

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Computer vendors are confused about viable places to show their new products. It is clear that press releases, web sites and consumer electronic stores are not sufficient at getting new product information out. Further, there is nothing quite like seeing and touching products to get an initial reaction on how they might work in your firm.

CES 2015 contained a notable number of new products that would change purchase decisions this year over last. Included are:

- New generation curved monitors from HP, Samsung, Toshiba, LG and others. One of these could potentially reduce a three monitor setup to one, taking less space on your desk and giving a better image to work with.
- Higher resolution monitors, including 5K, were shown. Software and hardware should be supporting these larger layout monitors this year, giving a full 4K image while surrounding the image with tool bars such as PDFlyer or Tic, Tie and Calculate.
- Display adapters supporting up to 5K resolutions. These become important to buyers of laptops and other portable units like the Microsoft Surface. The demonstration unit running a 5K monitor from a Surface performed brilliantly.
- Docking stations with 4K resolutions from companies like DisplayLink, Targus, Lenovo, IOGear and others. It was too early to purchase these products in 2014, but at this point most of the bugs, driver updates, operating system and application support has been worked out. You could choose a 4K monitor strategy instead of a 5K approach.
- New laptops from every notable vendor including HP, Lenovo, Toshiba, and others. The new generation laptops are more serviceable, and have new SSD drives that are twice the speed of SSD drives from 2014 and before. Some models have touch screen and 10 key pads built into the units. As these new generation products become available, all products released in 2014 and before are less attractive as primary units for an accounting firm.

- Improved scanners for both the desktop and portable use by auditors. Canon was

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Imp Smart and marker board sizes, this vendor has an app product that allows what is on the marker board to be captured on a tablet like the iPad. This product is a reasonably priced addition to meeting rooms.

We did not find any notable changes in keyboards, mice and laser printing. However, new technologies introduced that will be useful in 2016 and beyond include:

- 5G cellular, currently scheduled for delivery in 2020 with speeds of 4.7GB, replacing 3G and 4G.
- AW4P wireless power with the capability of charging cell phones, tablets, computer and automobiles.
- Micro projectors and wall mount projectors in the style of soundbars from companies like LG.
- IoT continues to be a risk area with more connected home devices, the consumerization of office technology, and no clear standard emerging in smart home technologies (Zigbee, Z-Wave, etc.) Z-Wave claims to have 1200 companies participating in their standard.
- Near Field Communications (NFC) was common primarily due to payment vendors.
- 3D printing improvements, including the ability to print food like cookies makes this technology more viable for your clients.
- 3D computers, including both the Sprout from HP, available now, and a prototype 3D product that made manipulating items with a stylus or simply by moving your head while wearing special glasses with sensors exceptionally realistic and easy (pictured).
- Zuta pocket printer, which is about the size of a hockey puck, and can print standard size pages.
- Noise cancelling technology for offices, much like we have had in headsets, should be a superior solution than white noise.

- Home grade LED floodlights with a built-in 720p camera for security purposes

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### **Better Results for Team Members and Clients Alike**

CES 2015 demonstrated that advances in computer hardware are far from done. Yes, there were new consumer items with smartphones, tablets and televisions, but there were far more impressive business tools shown if you looked in the right place.

Although there was less wow and sizzle than has been seen with some versions of this show in the past, the amount of new technology on display that should be used in your accounting firm is impressive and important. Take the effort to research the computers, monitors and supporting peripherals that you purchase this year. It is clear that almost every item normally purchased has been changed for the better. If you pick the right items, you will help your team members do better work in less time and with greater comfort for your clients.

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