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Randy Johnston • Feb. 08, 2016



The Consumer Electronics Show (CES), held annually in January in Las Vegas, introduces a variety of new products and technologies for consumers and businesses alike. Many consultants and authors use this event to find new products that can help clients and readers. While CES receives heavy national reporting and is the source of thousands of articles, looking for tools that can improve the practice of accounting is the focus of my efforts at the event.

It was clear that in 2016 and beyond, a few trends are obvious: higher speed 5G

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ne's portable kit. iRizer holds devices at various angles to ease use, reading, and ergonomics. The various angles that can be set in the iRizer product makes any situation where you are trying to be productive much simpler. At the extremely low price point, we'd recommend trying a few and then making this product part of everyone's standard equipment.

Just as interesting from the same company, was a series of keyboards. The founder and engineer explained how the manufacturer of "positive click" components had stopped making these items some time ago, and we lamented the loss of the old Keytronics and IBM keyboards.

Matias had to create new generation key switches themselves. They created three different keyboard switches, which you can see in the two accompanying pictures. One key switch model makes noise with a strong, positive touch, one has a strong, positive touch, and one has slightly less pressure needed for people with arthritis issues. If you prefer flat style keyboards, the company makes these as well.

Another winner from this year's CES is the Logitech Mx Anywhere 2 Mouse. If you have mobile workers, such as auditors, you want to put the best mice possible in their hands. The mouse is very precise and works on any surface, including glass. The LogiTech family of mice are available in a variety of ergonomic configurations. I leave ergonomic desktop mice in my office, my home office and carry an Anywhere mouse on the road, so I have a truly great mouse wherever I'm working. For desktop mice, you might want to consider products like the Performance Mouse MX or the MX Master. Remember that on mice, you are looking for high precision, but a single mouse model does not fit everyone's needs. You'll want to offer multiple options.

A practical solution to portable, encrypted storage was the LINK by fasetto. This portable Solid State Drive is available in 256GB or 2TB models. Connections are made

via 802.11ac technology, and the unit can have up to 36 users attached. These shared

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DisplayLink. DisplayLink included new products for multiple 4K monitor attachments with various landscape and portrait orientations. The new unit supports connections from tablets and phones such as the iPad/iPhone as well as from computers at the same time. The vendor has innovated in USB Type-C, Thunderbolt and 4K connections with hardware and software upgrades this year. It is clear that 4K technology for monitors and phones will become common.

It is also clear that 4K TV products are simply a bridge to the new generation 8K SUD TV offerings. The 8K sorting table shown by Panasonic will be a superb collaborative tool. The 4K SmartKapp marker board for collaboration can double as a large screen touchscreen monitor while providing multi-site collaboration. I'm hard pressed to imagine a CPA firm that has any clients as guests in a conference room that wouldn't own one or more of these presentation boards.

Intel's opening keynote for the conference was packed with all sorts of technology. For example, for accountants, the new SkyLake processor chip is making all current generation computers faster. The facial and object recognition of Intel's RealSense will get quite a bit of press this year as products using the technology are released. The RealSense camera is the only certified login device for the new Windows 10 Hello feature besides the Microsoft Surface. You'll note my face was scanned and placed on the large statue in the Intel booth using this technology. Intel has shipped its TrueKey password management which is sufficient for personal passwords, but won't be ready for use by accountants for business purposes until sometime in 2017.

YubiKey had a presence again this year at CES. We have admired this product since it first came out 8 years ago, and there is a new version that has been released. This hardware token helps lock up passwords with multi-factor authentication. The hardware fob is relatively low cost, and makes password management products like LastPass more secure by enabling multi-factor authentication.

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and a simple tool like the iRizer is only around \$40. While you may be thinking that if you are working in the cloud, hardware doesn't matter, that may be only partially true.

Hardware doesn't matter as much, but if it is slow, hard to use or is doing damage to your team members because of poor ergonomics, hardware matters a lot. If you skimp on hardware for your team members, you are paying for this in lost productivity. Consider all hardware and software components for your users, and pick appropriate solutions to maximize their productivity.

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