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Accounting Pros

Randy Johnston and Brian Tankersley, CPA, attended CES 2024 in Las Vegas in January, and provide a walkthrough of the technologies they think will have the greatest potential or interest for accounting professionals.

Brian Tankersley • Randy Johnston • Jan. 19, 2024

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SPEAKERS

Randy Johnston, Brian F. Tankersley, CPA.CITP, CGMA.

Intro: Welcome to the technology lab presented by *CPA Practice Advisor* with your hosts, Randy Johnston and Brian Tankersley.

Randy Johnston 00:03



Welcome to Technology Lab. I'm Randy Johnson with my co host, Brian Tankersley. And we're coming to you live from Las Vegas for CES Consumer Electronics Show 2024. Now we're pleased to have you along with us. And we're going to run a session today on the business technology from CES. Now on this one, Brian, you and I both saw lots of different technology all throughout the days that we were on site. And, you know, among the technology that I liked, the best for our accounting professionals, was the framework portable computer framework had a 13 inch model

that they'd introduced some years back, but this year that introduced a 16 inch

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Well, what I really liked about the framework computer is that you can put a graphics card in it, and you can upgrade the processor, you can upgrade the RAM, you can, you can actually add and remove components on it the way you used to with a desktop computer 15 years ago. So you're not locked in to something in there. But it still has a small form factor. You know, it's not, you know, in the past the computers were you could do, you could you know, change the components out, you know, you can, you've always been able to change the storage and the RAM out. But, you know, the ones where you could change out the processors, always were both acres, you know, they're just huge, huge, huge things, you know, they weigh eight pounds. And this one was I don't know the exact weight of this one, but it was significantly less, it looked like a traditional, relatively small notebook. Okay. And so it was a, it was a nice looking computer.

Randy Johnston 02:24

And you know, the philosophy of the company is that these framework computers, these laptops could have a life of six, seven and more years, as opposed to three and rotate or four and rotate, which many of you are using today. And I believe that it is absolutely achievable, that you can plug in a new component, and upgrade. Now, the other

Brian F. Tankersley, CPA.CITP, CGMA 02:48

thing about it, though, is that it also makes it easier for an end user or for a smaller accounting firm that doesn't have an IT manager, it makes it easier for somebody to put in a new keyboard themselves instead of having to get a technician do

Randy Johnston 03:04

it. Yeah, if there was a component failure, you could easily swap it in. We asked about

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that was very interesting to how the computer was made, had a secondary, it was a secondary monitor. And it was such high quality and use of usefulness that I'm thinking about some of the secondary screens that we've traditionally recommended to you the likes of you know, Asus or AOC. And over the last two to three years, we've recommended the ViewSonic monitors to you on a regular basis. We'll talk more about those in just a minute. But the Ricoh division, the PSU division had this very nice screen and this very high quality keyboard. So, Brian, I know you talked to Scott at some length about that.

Brian F. Tankersley, CPA.CITP, CGMA 04:38

Well, I'll have a report for you in a future technology lab. Scott committed to send me one to try out but I have to tell you that the keyboard was very, very solid. It looked like it would survive a zombie apocalypse. You know, a LAN party for 30 kids that went on for a month, you know, survived the dorms. So I mean, it looked like it would, it would take a lot of abuse. The, the display was very sharp, but it was, it looked like it would fit. You know, it's very, very thin, but it wasn't flimsy. You know, we actually looked at that we saw a couple of times, some of the rigs that have monitors have two monitors that you put on the side of a laptop here. And every one of those we looked at was flimsy. This one looked like it would take the abuse that staff could dish out. And, and, you know, again, to have I will say that I've done business with Fujitsu. Now Rico, I've used them I think I bought my first Fujitsu scanner, way back about 2007 or so. And, you know, I, they just were like our, so I feel very good about that about that device. Yeah,

Randy Johnston 05:54

no, another technology, there was AI, artificial intelligence everywhere. Some of us fake AI have some of those real, but one that I thought was possibly useful to accounting professionals was to have an avatar hologram, Nate. And there was a

company hold AI, that Brian had me do it, which I thought was generous, because I

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fashions.

Brian F. Tankersley, CPA.CITP, CGMA 07:11

I will say that the voice it actually it actually imitated the timbre and the pitch of Randy's voice. And it actually did a pretty nice job of doing that, you know, it was a, you know, given the very limited amount of input. I mean, he didn't sit there and talk to the for F hour they he talked to him for about a minute. It picked up enough out of the voice and enough off of the information about him that it did a pretty nice job of imitating him. You know it probably a Dana Carvey worthy impression. So I thought it was pretty good.

Randy Johnston 07:48

Yeah. And you know, what was interesting to me about that, Brian is you're talking about it was they sounded the voice was very close. And we know that it only takes about 30 words to be captured for a voice to be imitated. And it was clear it was doing a good job of imitating the voice. Well, we saw avatars and lots of other areas. And you know, one in the age tech area where we watch people and animals avatars be captured and then projected at life size. Some of the technology like that was fascinating. And we saw a dozen or more of those types

Brian F. Tankersley, CPA.CITP, CGMA 08:27

of things, you know, and I will say we saw, we saw these these glass windows, these glass LEDs that had that displays on them. And I think you know, for virtual meetings, that's one of the only places I can see those actually working. The glass LEDs are here, but they feel like they're a a solution in search of a problem in many cases, with the exception of it few you know, when you put a piece of glass like that, and you put it next to a table, it seems like it would feel more like a hologram almost

like you were in the middle of Star Wars or something and you're watching you're

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translucent TVs that we saw.

Brian F. Tankersley, CPA.CITP, CGMA 09:38

I mean, the the the use of the translucent LED on the front of a bakery case, it appeared to be doing eye tracking, and to be picking up on what you were looking at and then it would highlight those particular things in the bakery case that you were looking at, and then it would display things related to that on the on the case, thankfully, it didn't tell us how many calories or how many fat grams there were in those in those pieces, bakery things, but so but it was very effective there and I could see it for meetings. But again, those, those seethrough TVs, just, it's it's odd, but we did see the, the micro LEDs, and they had very, they don't use any backlighting. So the blacks are really plaque on the screen, as opposed to being as opposed to being kind of a gray. Yeah, and

Randy Johnston 10:36

speaking of the micro LEDs and Samsung, you know, there was new improvements in the Bixby technology. We've talked about decks before where it can make meeting connections. And they were connecting Microsoft copilot on iPhone as well as on Google and other approaches. But they also had a beautifully done curved Odyssey G nine monitor, the OLED, 56 inch display and a 49 and a 57. And the 49, I thought was just about perfect for business purposes. And the price quoted to us was about \$1,700, which again, for retail on that, that's probably reasonable.

Brian F. Tankersley, CPA.CITP, CGMA 11:26

And remember that that's the we saw you come in price, not the street price that you can actually get it at Amazon or, or CD W or someplace like that.

Randy Johnston 11:35

And we saw other interesting technologies, for example, on the launch event, the

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Well, if you think about it, you know, the if the thing about it is that with AI being able to generate photos, you really want to be able to trust that a photo is real. And so what this does is it uses the metadata associated with the data in the camera like your latitude, longitude, the date and time and the location, you know the all the information that you have your your camera type, and then you take the photo, it uploads it to their blockchain embeds the photo in their cloud storage, and they put a hash of it in the blockchain. So that if it's changed for any reason, it's they no longer checks out. But what it does is it gives you a way to effectively authenticate that photo, you do have to use right now it's iPhone only. But you do have to use your iPhone with it. And you don't use the standard Photos app, you actually use the app for click. And what's great about it, then is that you can have a link to send to somebody that says that here's what this is here was the lat long where this was taken. And it has all that associated metadata. So that you can you can prove you can have provenance over that image.

Randy Johnston 13:34

So it turns out that for things like inventories or, you know, proving a particular item, I think the picture can be done that way. And that actually makes pretty good sense. From our perspective.

Brian F. Tankersley, CPA.CITP, CGMA 13:49

And so again, if you think about this now, we potentially could be in a situation. So if you think about the use for the blockchain here, we could actually publish not the document itself, but just the hash of the document, the checksum, effectively that's affiliated with it, and then put that in the blockchain. So that can't be modified. So that way, people would be able to calculate the hash of the PDF, let's say I have an audit report or a comprehensive annual financial report or something like that. And

then they would be able to validate that that indeed, was the one that was approved,

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pending approval. So I could see your healthcare clients could get some benefit from some of those. Likewise, we saw a lot of aging tech, helping elderly clients, protect their assets protect themselves. One of the most interesting ones I thought was an uploading all all personal records that can be secured. So documentation of dispensation of personal assets and bank accounts and all sorts of other things. It was nice little vault application. And

Brian F. Tankersley, CPA.CITP, CGMA 15:32

I have to say that having having had I did that with my, with my sister and I about 2017, with both my late parents, we actually went in and scanned all of those documents, and I put him, you know, I put them online and share them with my sister. But this is a much simpler approach, it actually requires two factor authentication. And it had it looked like it was it was a much more robust tool for that. Now, going back to the the fall detection and things like that, one of the things that the Samsung ecosystem actually had was, it would actually watch for, you know, with all the smart devices, you would actually watch for activity and see when you hadn't been active in a while. So I'm imagining here, you know, you many of you that are of a certain age, remember, I've fallen and I can't get up. Well, now we have Bixby, I've fallen, and I can't get up. And so with these tools, it will actually, it actually can can potentially notify your loved one. You know, and again, this is a new tech, not relatively new technology. But it get but if you can set it where it can actually notify your loved one that they need to check on that person.

Randy Johnston 16:50

So Samsung had the whole home eco system named Bally and it is based on the Bixby technology, which is including Dex and some other things. So Samsung has been thoughtful about putting their ecosystem together. We also saw one that, you know, I noticed change Brian's life permanently, a walking cane that had a metronome

sound maker and a laser on it. And the medical explanation was that a different part

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right in between the steps when you're going into it. And we noticed that oh, well, Otis and all of the escalator manufacturers have been tricking us for years to this quite

Randy Johnston 18:01

a bit of interesting technology there. Now targets you know, a common manufacturer of bags and docking stations and other things have had developments in their connectivity for sound bars and docking stations, so forth with their mirror line. But they had purchased a product that specialized in Apple products called hyper. And we were fortunate enough to talk to hyper employees and and did get to meet the engineer behind a lot of their products. But they had new cables and charging blocks and things like that. So the gallium gallium nitride night nitrogen nitrogen Chargers were fascinating and there were so many sizes and models from just a relatively few watts up to 240 I think it was and international charging box and so forth, but they could charge your USB C, Thunderbolt USB A and so forth. Connectors. So I thought that those, that company had done a very nice job on that. So we also spent a little bit of time with a new network attached storage vendor ugreen They had some very interesting product offerings. A traditional NAS vendor Synology had upgraded their technology slightly so we can see some changes there. Now, a big new standard technology for the year will be Thunderbolt five. We did see Thunderbolt five docking stations from a variety of vendors including targets, which is how we kind of got off on that but other vendors like Kensington had their Thunderbolt five docking stations as well. So we did get to talk to gentleman that had created a company some time ago to test, HDMI standard equipment. And we discussed the new HDMI 2.1. B technology. And we were curious about the speeds of HDMI, because some of the vendors were claiming 80 gigabit or 100 gigabit standards. And we know we're going to need that for 8k technology, as we've discussed in prior times, the other one that got Brian's attention, because I think he's

going to want to go build some stuff with this is the Qi, too. And so, Brian, what did

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So that way you could have it, they literally showed and I've got a picture that I'll try to work into this into this display. But there's there actually showed a picture that had about five or six kitchen appliances that we're all running off of wireless, the wireless charging equipment. So the idea is that you could have a food processor or a blender or some other you know, or or, you know, maybe it's a maybe it's an inductive, cooking, cooking skillet. But you could you could use that instead of having to have a whole lot of courts. Now, I don't know about you. But I mean, when I get the kitchen, I don't really like courts, because bad things happen. When you when you trip on courts, you know, you, you knock over a big thing of onions into the floor, you break something, I mean, it's just not good. And so it was really nice to not have that I actually saw something that was about it was about size of a coaster. And I think I'm going to be buying one of those and getting a hole saw and cutting it into my desk so I can put my phone on it.

Randy Johnston 22:17

I figured you'd get that done. Well, another thing that we follow for many years is 3d printing. I know that's maybe not as much interest to those of you who are purely in accounting, but the ability to use plastic resins and ceramics to build parts. So many of the milling machines and 3d printers are so much for farther advanced. I noticed in particular with of all companies Nikon, where they were actually doing metal 3d printing with some of their technologies that 3d has come of age there was actually in the innovation section, a food printer, which can perfectly balanced nutrition in a printed bread, they call it 4d printing, but realistically, it was just a bread printer. So maybe one of the first food printers that I'd ever seen.

Brian F. Tankersley, CPA.CITP, CGMA 23:13

Well, let's not forget the drug printed guy had there was a 3d printer there that that had been approved in many European countries I recall. And and so imagine now,

you know how whether different doses of aspirin, you know, the therapeutic dose is

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print out and the proper size tablet for that dog and also that we can make a tablet for it to go down the smaller dog's throat.

Randy Johnston 24:21

And so I talked to the physician that was associated with that demonstration. And this idea of compounding mixing the drugs together in different formulations was doable with this and you are right Brian it was actually being used in three different European countries France, as I recall, the Netherlands and Belgium I believe were three. But regardless if that is a very interesting 3d printing concept. Well one other thing that we got to do was experience the loop from the central halls at the Las Vegas Convention Center to the New West Hall. And, and that's basically Tesla's in a tunnel is the best way I talk about it. So what would you have our listeners hear about the loop if they've never been on it? I

Brian F. Tankersley, CPA.CITP, CGMA 25:10

was underwhelmed. I mean, it was, it was nice to be able to it was nice as a way to get from one place to another. But it was evolutionary not revolutionary. I mean, it reminded me in many ways of, you know, the, the webway Peoplemover. That was in the in Disney back in the 70s, and 80s. And 90s, that was just basically a little cart, you sit down, and you're gonna reminded me almost of an airport tram, except you're riding in a Tesla that somebody was driving instead of, instead of a automatic piece of, you know, piece of mass transit equipment. So so, you know, it was very disappointing that there were humans driving it, instead of Tesla's just driving themselves. By the way, this, this, you actually have a picture of the of the size of the tunnel, but it's let's say it's, let's say it's 10 feet in diameter, maybe eight feet, it's not very big. It's not much bigger than than a Tesla. So it was really like driving on a windy one way road, where you can't there's you can't pass anybody. And so, you know, we were talking about what if they opened it up to the public. And it just

occurred to me that if you put a 73 Vega in the middle of that thing that needed a

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Brian. And you know, we never know what to expect. But in that case, we probably had some expectations that were maybe too high. We'll see how it works out as they get that build out to the airport and up into other parts of the city and really make it work like that. But in any case, we appreciate you. You know, listening in with us today on the business update here for CES. Look us up separately for the personal update for the innovation update. But we hope these business updates give you some ideas to look for in your own personal practice and in your life. All the best to you have a great day.

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