

CES 2005

CES brings new things to light

Gadgets get tiny, TVs get big

By Kathleen Maher

The running dialog the technology industry carries on between its various factions, including consumer electronics, home theater, automotive, home automation, photography, and PCs, gets really loud at the start of every new year when CES, the consumer electronics trade show, comes to Las Vegas. The level of discussion has also changed over the years—there is less bickering and considerably more meetings, and new industry organizations pop up to meet every situation.

In fact, the Consumer Electronics Association itself is one of those organizations founded originally to support U.S. companies. It has expanded its role to involve itself in regulatory issues that may impact the fortunes of its members. At issue this year and every year for at least the last five years is digital rights management.

As all content becomes digital there are more options for capturing, enjoying, and sharing it. This last capabil-

ity has been giving content providers the heebie jeebies ever since Gutenberg invented the printing press or god invented the monk, for that matter. At the same time, the ability to copy and distribute information has sparked the imaginations of creators to drive human progress on from printing to radio, TV, movies, and 3D Imax magic. At CES it's clear that that progress is going to continue over and around barriers.

Consumer rights

Digital Technology, and specifically DRM, has also given content providers the ability to turn back the clock and make all digital content difficult to share if they want to. The industry has already tried several ill-advised approaches to content protection, including the original DivX format supported by Circuit City and a bunch of Hollywood lawyers, copy-protected Audio CDs, disposable DVD technology from Convex

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Group of Atlanta, and now the broadcast flag. On the other hand, the content providers have prospered as a result of content protection approaches—including scrambling technologies for satellite content and copy protection for DVD. Sure, protections can be broken, but the industry seems to make enough money from those willing to pay up that it settles down from time to time.

Actually, the content providers are already showing signs of settling down

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MACWORLD SAN FRANCISCO

Photo: Jon Peddie Research



iPOD NATION—The crowds file out of Steve Jobs's keynote ready to buy new Mac minis and iPod Shuffles. See Macworld San Francisco coverage, page 23.

I/ITSEC

Serious simulation in Orlando

By Ben Delaney

According to its sponsors, the Interservice/Industry Training, Simulation and Education Conference (I/ITSEC) "promotes cooperation among the Armed Services, Industry, Academia, and various Government agencies in pursuit of improved training and education programs, identification of common training issues, and development of multiservice programs."

What this means in ordinary language is that the U.S. military services are using training simulation in a very big way, and they want the motley simulators to work well, work reliably, and to be interoperable among vendors

and services. The conference was held this year, as it has been every year for the past decade, in Orlando, Florida, home of Mickey Mouse and every conceivable T-shirt shop and franchise food joint in the known universe. Aside from the setting and the awkward timing—usually the week after Thanksgiving—this conference is very well planned and operated. The show has grown out of the hotel ballroom it started in and has grown to over 400 exhibitors and a quarter of the gigantic Orange County Convention Center. Nearly 16,000 people attended this year, up from 15,000 last year, including 1,792 from 44 countries other

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