

CES: Is It Really Worth It?

Permit me to vent a little

On the not so controversial side of the biz, Chief Manufacturing rolled out three new electro-mechanical lift/swivel units, called the Cinematic Series. One unit will raise/lower/pan a plasma or LCD on a pedestal. Others extend horizontally from the wall and pan. All include a wireless handheld remote control.

Sampo showed a variety of plasmas and LCD/TVs. ServoTV, a 42" WXGA plasma that incorporates an 802.11a Wi-Fi transmitter that allows a user to broadcast any of the unit's analog signals to a Sampo Client TV, a 10.2" battery-powered LCD, or to any wireless enabled PC or laptop. ServoTV users are then free to enjoy HD or analog media on the main screen, while others watch entirely different analog sources upon the Client TV. This will have distinct applications in the educational and training markets.

eBay, which recently announced the \$2B purchase of Skype, the internet phone company, was at CES. With revenue of a scant \$7M, Skype allows free internet phone calls. The business plan is to charge non-Skype participants who are on the other line. eBay offered four seminars for retailers to learn how to sell on their site.

And just for fun, Sony rolled out a slick new version of their PSP (Play Station Portable) handheld which handles games, video, MP3, MP4 WAV or ATRAC3plus music files. The landscape-oriented unit with 5 screen uses two types of removable storage: Memory Stick Duo, or full video on UMD cartridge.

Bleary eyed, tired and about done with all these trinkets, I came around a corner late in the day and found Ellen DeGeneres on the floor wrestling with a Sony robotic dog right in front of me. They were shooting a promotional video of her.

So with all the headaches of getting around town during CES, I ask again, ? Is it worth it? Heck, yes.

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