

CES—YOU AIN'T SEEN NOTHING YET

10 Cool New Toys From CES

By **John D. Sutter** and **Brandon Griggs**, CNN—Las Vegas, Nevada (CNN)
 New TVs, 3-D and otherwise, proved to be bit hits at the annual technology show.

Three-dimensional televisions, Internet-enabled TVs, touch-screen "tablet" computers, e-book readers and other fun new gadgets were scattered all over the enormous Consumer Electronics Show in Las Vegas, Nevada.

CES, which ended on Sunday, is regarded as one of the best trade shows for spotting new technologies before they take off. DVDs, CD players and Blu-ray all were introduced at previous shows. It is the largest event of its kind in the world.

As we hunted through thousands of tech displays at the show this year, these 10 products particularly grabbed our attention. It's hard to say which, if any, of the new technologies shown at CES this year will become a hit with consumers. But these 10 new toys proved to be useful, unique or just plain strange. So, here they are, in no particular order. Please let us know what you think.



Toshiba CELL TV with gesture technology

Toshiba unveiled a prototype of a television that doesn't require a remote control -- TV watchers simply wave their hands in the air to control the menu, fast-forward movies and turn the volume up or down. Many TV makers are working on "gesture" technology for TVs, and it hasn't been perfected, but Toshiba is among the first to show it off publicly.



In a demo at CES, a woman put her palm out in a "halt" position to select items from a 3-D, spherical menu on the TV screen. She looked like she was swimming the breaststroke when she commanded the TV to zoom in on an image. The TV uses infrared technology to sense a viewer's movements in a particular zone of the room, which a demonstrator referred to as the "couch-potato zone."

Price: Unannounced - Available: 2011 or 2012

What's cool: The idea of technology that reads human gestures has the potential to revolutionize the way we interact with computers and TVs.

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TCL 3-D TV, sans glasses

One of the big problems with 3-D TV is that most systems, when they debut later this year, will require viewers to wear 3-D glasses. They're goofy, expensive and, some testers complain, cause headaches and nausea.



But TCL Corporation, the Chinese company that's a parent of RCA, showed off 3-D TV technology that doesn't require glasses. A company representative said the technology, which adds a layer of rippled lenses to the front of the TV screen to produce the three-dimensional effect, could be used in the home as well as on billboards.

"Basically, we put the glasses that you'd be wearing on the TV," a TCL spokeswoman said.

Price: Unannounced Available: 2011 for commercial clients

What's cool: No irritating glasses.

Blio e-reader

Amid a crowd of promising new electronic readers at CES, this one stood out. This software application, built in part by futurist-inventor Ray Kurzweil, turns almost any laptop, netbook or smartphone into an image-rich, full-color electronic reader. Blio uses publishers' original PDF files to preserve the exact format of books and magazines while supporting interactive multimedia, including video and Web links. It will launch with an online store featuring more than 1.2 million titles. Best of all: It's free.



Price: Did we mention it's free? Available: Late February

Why it's cool: Blio also has a read-aloud feature and will translate to or from English. It looked impressive in a demo at CES. Tivit mobile TV add-on for phones

Tivit, a device that brings mobile TV to phones



The Tivit, a cute, credit-card-sized device, catches live television signals -- like local weather and news -- and brings them to smartphones such as the iPhone, Blackberry and Droid.

The gadget is an intermediary step for people waiting for mobile-TV-enabled phones, and for those who don't want to purchase a new phone just to get TV on it. Tivit, from a company called Valups, uses an antennae to pick up mobile free digital TV signals from local television stations, and transmits them to phones via Wi-Fi, which it also creates, meaning you don't have to find someone else's Internet hot-spot to get a connection.

Price: About \$100 Available: Spring 2010

Why it's cool: Upgrade to mobile TV without getting a new phone. Plus it's sleek.

Samsung TV remote with a TV screen on it

How meta. Samsung unveiled at CES a television remote with its own television screen. The "All-in-One-Premium" remote, which also plays its own audio, can be tuned to different TV channels than the TV it controls. It will come with Samsung's upcoming C9000 high-definition TV, and will be sold separately, said spokesman Jermain Anderson.



So, why would a person want such a thing? A Samsung spokesman said the TV-playing remote has as few functions. Say you're watching a sitcom while your roommate wants to watch a basketball game. One of you can watch on the remote, he said. The remote-watcher can put headphones on so you can both hear the audio.

Chalk this one up to another big trend at CES: Digital screens are ending up everywhere.

Price: Unannounced Available: 2010

Why it's cool: It's so over-the-top unnecessary that it's a little bit interesting.

Lenovo IdeaPad U1 tablet-laptop

Tablet computers created quite a stir at CES. These mid-sized devices fall somewhere between mobile phones and laptops in the computer continuum.

Among the standout tablets at CES was Lenovo's U1 hybrid. It looks like a laptop, but its touch-sensitive screen pops off to become its own tablet. Independent from the keyboard, the screen looks like a big iPhone, and is said to be ideal for



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reading digital books, sorting through and resizing photos and surfing the Web.

Lenovo IdeaPad U1 tablet-laptop (con't)

The tablet is not without issues, though. One short-circuited in a demo for CNN.

Price: Less than \$1,000 Available: Summer 2010

Why it's cool: It's got the best of both worlds -- a take-with-you tablet for consuming media, and a keyboard for content creation.

Intel Infoscape

It's not a consumer product yet that we know of, but this multitouch-screen display at Intel's CES booth fascinated us and just about everyone else who saw it. Two seven-by-seven-foot HD screens showed an ever-shifting array of 576 cubes, each representing a photo, video or other piece of Internet content pulled from 20,000 sources and more than 20 live feeds. Touch a cube, and it expanded the content in real time.



Available: Now? Price: Unknown

Why it's cool: Can you imagine your digital life arrayed like this in your home or office? Plus it just looked neat.

Palm Pre Plus

The upgraded Pre and Pixi smartphones have an app that creates a personal Wi-Fi cloud.

This newly announced smartphone, along with its thinner cousin the Pixi Plus, wouldn't be a huge upgrade over the current Pre except for one novel feature: The capability to create a 3G mobile hotspot for up to five laptops or other devices. The function comes in a downloadable app that lets Pre users create a personal Wi-Fi cloud on Verizon's 3G network.



Price: Unannounced Available: January 25

Why it's cool: Wi-Fi everywhere you go, without paying Starbucks fees or buying a wireless card, sounds pretty sweet.

Intel Reader

OK, so it's an expensive niche product. And we've already given some love to Intel in this article. But this handheld device that scans printed text, converts it to voice and reads it aloud seems too groundbreaking to ignore.



Hold the it over a page of a book, snap a high-res image of the text and the thing will read it aloud to you almost immediately. It also can play documents you transfer from a computer.

Price: About \$1,500 Available: Now

Why it's cool: Yes, it's pricey, but this gadget could be a life-changing tool for the dyslexic or vision-impaired.



Parrot AR.Drone

It's a remote-controlled helicopter. And a gaming device. And yet another use for your iPhone. This flying toy is about the size of a pizza and can hover almost motionlessly, propelled by four rotors and an on-board computer. Users steer the Drones with iPhones, which act as remote controllers. A camera mounted on the AR.Drone sends a live video feed to the iPhone, meaning that you see what the Drone sees. Parrot is creating augmented-reality video games for the open-source device.

Price: less than \$500 Available: Summer 2010

Why it's cool: It's fun, it's different and it can hang suspended in the air like the spaceship in "District 9."

Complete Article at: tinyurl.com/iahi0210-01<

5 New Technologies That Will Change Everything

3D TV, HTML5, video over Wi-Fi, superfast USB, and mobile "augmented reality" will emerge as breakthrough technologies in the next few years. Here's a preview of what they do and how they work.

Glenn Fleishman, PC World Recommends

While sipping a cup of organically farmed, artisan-brewed tea, I tap on my gigabit-wireless-connected tablet, to pull up a 3D movie on the razor-thin HDTV hanging on the wall. A media server streams the film via a superspeedy USB connection to a wireless HD transmitter, which then beams it to the TV.

That actor--who was he? My augmented-reality contact lenses pick up the unique eye motion I make when I have a query, which I then enter on a virtual keyboard that appears in the space in front of me. Suddenly my field of vision is covered with a Web page showing a list of the actor's movies, along with some embedded video clips.

These technologies will come to life in the distant future, right? Future, yes. Distant, no.

Speed and content (much of it video) will be paired consistently across mobile, laptop, desktop, and home-entertainment systems. New ways of using video--including adding 3D depth or artificial visual overlays--will require more speed, storage, and computational power.

In our preview of technologies that are [well on their way to reality](#), we look at the connective tissue of USB 3.0, 802.11ac, and 802.11ad for moving media--especially video--faster; at HTML5 for displaying video and content of all kinds consistently across all our devices; at augmented reality to see how the digital world will stretch into our physical reality by overlaying what we see with graphics and text; and at 3D TV, which will add image depth and believability to the experience of watching TV.



USB 3.0

The new USB 3.0 standard preserves backward compatibility by allowing older cables to plug into newer jacks; but newer cables like this one have extra pins that boost the data rate to 4.8 gbps.

Before you leave work, you need to back up your computer. You push a button, and 5 minutes later, while you're still packing up, your system has dumped 150GB of data onto an encrypted 512GB [superfast solid-state drive](#), which you eject to take with you for offsite backup. On your way home, you stop at a movie kiosk outside a fast-food restaurant and buy a feature-length 3D video download on sale. You plug in your drive, the kiosk reads your credentials, and while you watch a 90-second preview of coming attractions, the 30GB video transfers onto your SSD. You pull out the drive and head home.

USB may be one of the least-sexy technologies built into present-day computers and mobile devices, but speed it up tenfold, and it begins to sizzle. Cut most of the other cables to your computer, and the standard ignites. Bring in the potential of uncompressed video transfer, and you have a raging fire.

Any task that involves transferring data between your PC and a peripheral device--scanning, printing, or transferring files, among others--will be far [faster with USB 3.0](#). In many cases, the transfer will be complete before you realize it has started.

[The 3.0 revision](#) of USB, dubbed SuperSpeed by the folks who control testing and licensing at the USB Implementors Forum (USB-IF), is on track to deliver more than 3.2 gigabits per second (gbps) of actual throughput. That transfer rate will make USB 3.0 five to ten times faster than other standard desktop peripheral standards, except some flavors of DisplayPort and the increasingly out-of-favor eSATA.

In addition, USB 3.0 can shoot full-speed data in both directions at the same time, an upgrade from 2.0's "half duplex" (one direction at a time) rates. USB 3.0 jacks will accept 1.0 and 2.0 plug ends for backward compatibility, but 3.0 cables will work only with 3.0 jacks.

This technology could be a game-changer for device connectivity. A modern desktop computer today may include jacks to accommodate ethernet, USB 2.0, FireWire 400 or 800 (IEEE 1394a or 1394b) or both, DVI or DisplayPort or both, and--on some--eSATA. USB 3.0 could eliminate all of these except ethernet. In their place, a computer may have several USB 3.0 ports, delivering data to monitors, retrieving it from scanners, and exchanging it with hard drives. The improved speed

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comes at a good time, as much-faster flash memory drives are [in the pipeline](#).

USB 3.0 is fast enough to allow uncompressed 1080p video (currently our highest-definition video format) at 60 frames per second, says Jeff Ravencraft, president and chair of the USB-IF. That would enable a camcorder to forgo video compression hardware and patent licensing fees for MPEG-4. The user could either stream video live from a simple camcorder (with no video processing required) or store it on an internal drive for later rapid transfer; neither of these methods is feasible today without heavy compression. Citing 3.0's versatility, some analysts see the standard as a possible complement--or even alternative--to the consumer HDMI connection found on today's [Blu-ray players](#).

The new USB flavor could also turn computers into real charging stations. Whereas USB 2.0 can produce 100 milliamperes (mA) of trickle charge for each port, USB 3.0 ups that quantity to 150mA per device. USB 2.0 tops out at 500mA for a hub; the maximum for USB 3.0 is 900mA.

With mobile phones moving to support USB as the standard plug for charging and syncing (the movement is well underway in Europe and Asia), and with U.S. carriers having recently committed to doing the same, the increased amperage of USB 3.0 might let you do away with wall warts (AC adapters) of all kinds.

In light of the increased importance and use of USB in its 3.0 version, future desktop computers may very well have two internal hubs, with several ports easily accessible in the front to act as a charging station. Each hub could have up to six ports and support the full amperage. Meanwhile, laptop machines could multiply USB ports for better charging and access on the road. (Apple's Mac Mini already includes five USB 2.0 ports on its back.)

The higher speed of 3.0 will accelerate data transfers, of course, moving more than 20GB of data per minute. This will make [performing backups](#) (and maintaining offsite backups) of increasingly large collections of images, movies, and downloaded media a much easier job.

Possible new applications for the technology include on-the-fly syncs and downloads (as described in the case study above). The USB-IF's Ravencraft notes that customers could download movies at the gas pump at of a filling station. "With high-speed USB [2.0], you couldn't have people waiting in line at 15 minutes a crack to download a movie," Ravencraft says.

Manufacturers are [poised to take advantage](#) of USB 3.0, and analysts predict mass adoption of the standard on computers within a couple of years. The format will be popular in mobile devices and consumer electronics, as well. Ravencraft says that manufacturers currently sell

more than 2 billion devices with built-in USB each year, so there's plenty of potential for getting the new standard out fast.



Video Streaming Over Wi-Fi

Today's Wi-Fi will be left in the dust by 802.11ac and 802.11ad, both of which will be capable of carrying multiple video streams and of operating at far higher data rates.

When you get home--with your high-def, 3D movie stored on a flash drive--you plug the drive into your laptop and transfer it to your network file server over a gigabit Wi-Fi connection. A couple of minutes later, the movie is ready to stream via a 60GHz wireless link from your networked entertainment center to your wall-mounted HDTV.

Wired ethernet has consistently achieved higher data speeds than Wi-Fi, but [wireless standards](#) groups are constantly trying to figure out ways to help Wi-Fi catch up. By 2012, two new protocols--802.11ac and 802.11ad--should be handling over-the-air data transmission at 1 gbps or faster.

As a result, future users can have multiple high-definition video streams and gaming streams active across a house and within a room. Central media servers, Blu-ray players, and other set-top boxes can sit anywhere in the home, streaming content to end devices in any location. For example, an HD video display, plugged in with just a power cord, can stand across the room from a Blu-ray player, satellite receiver, or computer--no need for expensive, unsightly cables.

The 802.11ac and 802.11ad standards should be well suited for home use, though their applications will certainly extend far beyond the home. The names reflect the internal method of numbering that the [engineering group IEEE](#) uses: 802 for networking, 11 for wireless, and one or more letters in sequence for specific task groups (that's how we got 802.11a, b, g, h, n, and others).

The 802.11ac standard will update [802.11n](#), the latest and greatest of a decade's worth of wireless local area networking (WLAN) technology that began with 802.11b. With 802.11ac, [wireless networking](#) performance will leap from a theoretical top speed of 600 mbps to a nominal maximum of more than 1 gbps. In practice, the net data carried by 802.11ac will be likely be between 300 mbps and 400 mbps--up from 160 mbps or so for a good real-

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world 802.11n setup, and more than enough capacity to carry multiple compressed video streams over a single channel simultaneously. Or users may assign individual streams running on unique frequencies to a number of separate channels. Like 802.11n, 802.11ac will use many antennas for receiving and sending data wirelessly.

The 802.11ac flavor still won't have the capacity to carry lossless high-definition video (video that retains the full fidelity and quality of the raw source), however. Today, lossless video is common over wired connections after decompression or decoding of a data stream from a satellite, cable, or disc. The right hardware will be able to take the 802.11ac compressed data stream and send it directly to a decoder in an HDTV set; some HD sets already have this capability today. But when uncompressed video has to stream at a rate faster than 1 gbps, a speedier format must be used.

That's where 802.11ad comes in. It abandons the 2.4GHz and 5GHz bands of the spectrum (where [today's Wi-Fi](#) works) to the newly available 60GHz spectrum. Because the 60GHz spectrum has an ocean of frequencies available in most countries—including in the United States—you'll be able to use multiple distinct channels to carry more than 1 gbps of uncompressed video each.

Unfortunately, the millimeter-long waves that make up 60GHz signals penetrate walls and furniture poorly, and oxygen readily absorbs the waves' energy. So 802.11ad is best suited for moving data across short distances between devices in the same room. Apart from supporting fast video transfers, 802.11ad will permit you to move files or sync data between devices at speeds approaching that of USB 3.0—and 1000 times faster than Bluetooth 2.

The 802.11ad spec is one of three competing ideas for using the 60GHz band of the spectrum. The Wireless HD trade group, a consortium of consumer electronics firms, is focusing on video use of the 60GHz band, while the [Wireless Gigabit Alliance \(WiGig\)](#) is looking at networking and consumer uses. Membership in the various groups overlaps, making an interoperable and perhaps unified spec possible. Though 802.11ad doesn't specifically address video, it will be a generic technology that can accommodate many kinds of data. At a minimum, each group will work to prevent interference with one another's purposes.

The combination of 802.11ac and 802.11ad, coupled with USB 3.0, will allow you to position clusters of computer equipment and entertainment hardware around your home. USB 3.0 and gigabit ethernet might connect devices located in a cabinet or on a desk; 802.11ac will link clusters across a home; and 802.11ad will carry data to mobile devices, displays, and other gear within a room.

Allen Huotari, the technical leader at [Cisco](#) Consumer

Products (which now includes Linksys products and ships millions of Wi-Fi and ethernet devices each year) says that the change in home networks won't result from "any one single technology in the home, but rather a pairing of technologies or a trio of technologies—wired and/or wireless—for the backbone and the wireless on the edges."

This means fewer wires and cables, better speeds, and higher-quality video playback than anything possible today. By 2012, both specifications should be readily available.



3D TV

Panasonic and other makers of high-definition TVs are looking to faux 3D technology to provide stereoscopic depth—and a reason for consumers to buy a newer set.

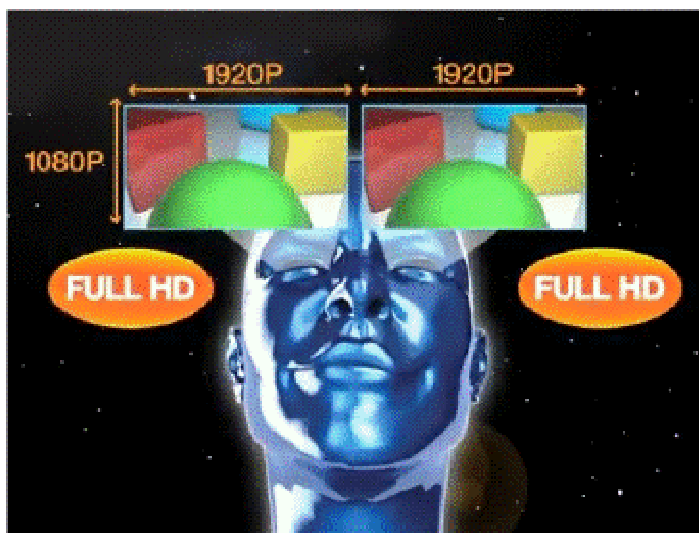
Disconnecting your active-shutter 3D glasses from a charger, you slip them on, eager to check out your downloaded copy of *Hulk VI: Triumph of the Stretch Fabrics*, the latest entrant in the green antihero's film franchise. You drop into a comfy chair, tell the kids it's time for a movie, and twist the heat pouch on a bag of popcorn to start it popping. The kids grab their own glasses and sit down to watch the Hulk knock the Predator practically into their laps!

When television makers introduced HDTVs, it was inevitable that they would figure out a way to render the technology obsolete not long after everyone bought a set. And they have. The next wave in home viewing is 3DTV—a 2D picture with some stereoscopic depth.

As 3D filmmaking and film projection technology have improved, Hollywood has begun building a (still small) library of depth-enhanced movies. The potential to synthesize 2D movies into 3D could feed demand, however—the way colorizing technology increased interest in black-and-white films in some circles in the 1980s. For movies based on computer animation—such as *Toy Story*

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3D, a newly rendered version of the first two movies in the series--it's already happening.

The promise of 3D is a more immersive, more true-to-life experience, and substantively different from almost anything you've watched before. In commercial theaters, 3D projection typically involves superimposing polarized or distinctly colored images on each frame and then having viewers wear so-called "passive" glasses that reveal different images to each eye. The brain synthesizes the two images into a generally convincing notion of depth.

In contrast, 3D at home will almost certainly rely on alternating left and right views for successive frames. HDTVs that operate at 120Hz (that is, 120 cycles of refresh per second) are broadly available, so the ability to alternate left and right eye images far faster than the human eye can follow already exists. Fundamental industry standards are in place to allow such recording, says Alfred Poor, an analyst with GigaOm and the author of the Web site HDTV Almanac.

Viewing 3DTV displays will require "active" glasses that use rapidly firing shutters to alternate the view into each eye. Active glasses are expensive today, but their price will drop as 3D rolls out. Meanwhile, designers are in the development phase of producing a 3D set that doesn't require the glasses.

Sony and Panasonic have announced plans to produce 3D-capable displays, and Panasonic recently demonstrated a large-screen version that the company expects to ship in 2010. As happened when HDTVs rolled out, premium 3DTVs will appear first, followed by progressively more-affordable models.

Creating and distributing enough 3D content to feed consumers' interest may be more of a challenge. Poor noted that filmmakers are currently making or adapting

only a handful of features each year for 3D. But techniques to create "synthetic 3D" versions of existing films (using various tracking, focus, and pattern cues for splitting images) could fill the gap.

Existing terrestrial cable and IPTV networks should be able to distribute 3D content. The bandwidth that such networks use to deliver typical HD broadcasts will be adequate for delivering 3D video once the networks upgrade to newer video compression techniques. Satellite may face a more difficult road, since such systems already use the best levels of compression.

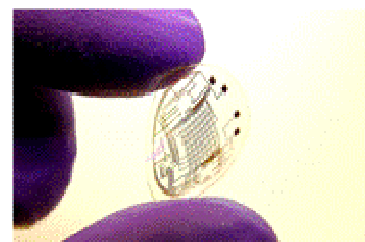
For physical media playback, Blu-ray can store the data needed, and 3D Blu-ray players are already on the drawing board. No fundamental changes in Blu-ray will be necessary, so the trade group that created the standard is focusing compatibility--such as ensuring that a 2D TV can play a 3D disc.

Standards issues might not end up being very troublesome, so long as the 3DTVs are flexible enough. An industry group is working on setting some general parameters, much as digital TV was broken up into 480, 720, and 1080 formats, along with progressive and interlaced versions. A 3DTV may need to support multiple formats, but all will involve alternating images and a pair of shutter-based glasses.

Poor expects that 3DTV will be but a minor upgrade to existing HDTV sets. The upgraded sets will need a modified display controller that alternates images 60 per second for each eye, as well as an infrared or wireless transmitter to send synchronization information to the 3D glasses.

"Augmented Reality" in Mobile Devices

Babak Parviz, a professor at the University of Washington specializing in nanotechnology, is working on a bionic contact lens that would paint imagery and information directly on the eye to augment reality.



You enjoyed Hulk VI so much on your home theater setup that you decided to see it on the big screen. The movie is still playing, but you're not sure how to find the movie theater where it's playing. In the old days, you might have printed out directions from MapQuest; but nowadays you don't need to do anything so primitive. Instead, you dock your smartphone on the dashboard as you slip into your car, and instantly it superimposes driving directions to the theater are superimposed on your car's windshield. As you approach your destination, you see a group of tall

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"Augmented Reality" in Mobile Devices (cont)

buildings. Superimposed on the windshield over one of the buildings is the building's name, the name of the movie theater inside it, the name Hulk VI, and a countdown to show time. "Turn left in 100 yards," the navigator speaks through your stereo as a large turning arrow appears, guiding you into the parking structure.

In Neal Stephenson's book *Snow Crash*, "gargoyles" are freelance intelligence gatherers who have wired themselves to see (through goggles that annotate all of their experiences) a permanent overlay of data on top of the physical world. In less immersive fashion, we may all become gargoyles as "augmented reality" becomes an everyday experience.

Augmented reality is a catchall term for overlaying what we see with computer-generated contextual data or visual substitutions. The point of the technology is to enhance our ability to interact with things around us by providing us with information immediately relevant to those things.

At work, you might walk around the office and see the name and department of each person you pass painted on them--along with a graphical indicator showing what tasks you owe them or they owe you. Though many case scenarios involve "heads-up" displays embedded in windshields or inside eyeglasses, the augmented reality we have today exists primarily on the "heads-down" screens of smartphones.

Several companies have released programs that overlay position- and context-based data onto a continuous video camera feed. The data comes from various radios and sensors built into modern smartphones, including GPS radios (for identifying position by satellite data), accelerometers (for measuring changes in speed and orientation), and magnetometers (for finding position relative to magnetic north).

In an application called Nearest Places, the names and locations of subway stops, parks, museums, restaurants, and other places of interest are shown on top of an iPhone's video feed. As you walk or turn, the information changes to overlay your surroundings.

"Smartphones and the related apps are the trailblazers for augmented reality," says Babak Parviz, a professor at the University of Washington who specializes in nanotechnology. "In the short to medium term, my guess is that they will dominate the field."

Other prototype applications display information dropped at particular coordinates as 3D models that the user can walk around, or as animations whose details update in 3D relative to the user's position. But the technology for those apps isn't ripe yet; handhelds require a more-precise

positioning mechanism in order to handle that kind of data insertion. Fortunately, each smartphone generation seems to include more and better sensors.

In other realms, augmented reality may serve to provide not just additional information, but enhanced vision. One day, infrared cameras mounted on the front of a car will illuminate a far-away object represented as a bright-as-day image on an in-windshield display. Radar signals and wireless receivers will detect and display cars that are out of sight; and one piece of glass will host GPS and traffic reporting.

Leaping past displays, Parviz and his team are working on ways to put the display directly on the eyeball. They're trying to develop a technology for embedding video circuitry into wearable contact lenses. While wearing such contact lenses, you would see a continuous, context-based data feed overlaid on your field of vision.

Before Parviz's lenses become a reality, augmented reality is likely to become a routine navigation and interaction aid on mobile devices. In addition, game developers may use the technology to overlay complete digital game environments over the reality that gamers see around them.

HTML5

Web pages built with HTML5 will display the same on any browser--desktop or mobile.

Hulk VI was great, but what should you watch this evening? Before heading off to work in the morning, you click to some trailers on a movie Website, but you don't have time to watch many. So you use your mobile phone to snap a picture of the 2D barcode on one of the videos; the phone's browser then takes you to the same site. On the commuter train to the office, you watch the previews over a 4G cell phone connection. A few of the movies have associated games that you try out on your phone, too.

Remember when every Website had a badge that read "optimized for Netscape Navigator" or "requires Internet Explorer 4"? In the old days, people made Web pages that worked best with--or only with--certain browsers. To some extent, they still do.

The new flavor of the HTML--the standard program for writing Web pages--is called HTML5 (Hypertext Markup Language version 5); and HTML5 aims to put that practice to bed for good.

Specifically, HTML5 may do away with the need for audio, video, and interactive plug-ins. It will allow designers to create Websites that work essentially the same on every browser--whether on a desktop, a laptop, or a mobile device--and it will give users a better, faster, richer Web experience.

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HTML5 (cont)

Instead of leaving each browser maker to rely on a combination of its in-house technology and third-party plug-ins for multimedia, HTML5 requires that the browser have built-in methods for audio, video, and 2D graphics display. Patent and licensing issues cloud the question of which audio and video formats will achieve universal support, but companies have plenty of motivation to work out those details.

In turn, Website designers and Web app developers won't have to deal with multiple incompatible formats and workarounds in their efforts to create the same user experience in every browser.

This is an especially valuable advance for mobile devices, as their browsers today typically have only limited multimedia support. The iPhone's Safari browser, for example, doesn't handle Adobe Flash--even though Flash



is a prime method of delivering video content across platforms and browsers.

"It'll take a couple of years to roll out, but if all the browser companies are supporting video display with no JavaScript [for compatibility handling], just the video tag and no plug-in, then there's no downside to using a mobile device," says Jeffrey Zeldman, a Web designer and leading Web standards guru. "Less and less expert users will have better and better experiences."

Makers of operating systems and browsers appear to be falling into line behind HTML5. Google Chrome, Apple Safari, Opera, and WebKit (the development package that underlies many mobile and desktop programs), among others, are all moving toward HTML5 support.

For its part, Microsoft says that Internet Explorer 8 will support only parts of HTML5. But Microsoft may not want to risk having its Internet Explorer browser lose more market share by resisting HTML5 in the face of consensus among the other OS and browser makers.

HTML5 is now completing its last march toward a final draft and official support by the World Wide Web Consortium.

Complete Article at: tinyurl.com/iahi0210-02



8 Gadgets that will be huge in 2010

Heard of Sezmi, Ideapad or Backflip? The buzz on these will last all year

By Sarah Jacobsson and PC World staff

The year 2009 is still a not-so-distant memory, but we're already looking for the next big thing in 2010. Last year, we bought iPhones and Flip camcorders by the millions, but what will it be this year? The Apple Tablet, announced Jan. 27, would surely be a hit, and a new, more powerful iPhone would be greeted with open arms and open wallets. But we've found other strong contenders, such as the Xbox "Project Natal" gaming controller, the Sezmi TV broadcast and streaming system, and the sharp-looking new IdeaPad U1 laptop from Lenovo. Click forward to check out the glamor shots and the details for each soon-to-be-hot gadget.

Complete Article at: tinyurl.com/iahi0210-03

In-Room Media that “Wows”

Scott Schreiber, President, Enterprise Hotels, The Kessler Collection

With much in the hotel industry becoming commoditized, it's challenging to find new and innovative ways to differentiate properties. Attracting customers is crucial, but in today's highly competitive market, it's equally important to provide those customers with a travel experience that builds loyalty for your brand and makes your properties the destination of choice.

In recent years, The Kessler Collection's (www.kesslercollection.com) clientele has become more discerning than ever before. These guests are travel-savvy, know exactly what they're looking for, and typically have rich media options at home. Hotel management wanted to ensure that they offered at least comparable media capabilities, with the goal of giving guests options they had never before experienced. Management also wanted to find an in-room media solution that not only meets its needs today, but one that would offer a scalable, unified platform that will allow the brand to adopt new technologies as they emerge.

The Kessler Collection chose to work with Roomlinx (www.roomlinx.com) based on its ability to offer a comprehensive, flexible set of features that would let management tailor an in-room media offering to rival what most people enjoy at home. The solution offers guests access to Web TV, HD Hollywood movies, world radio, unlimited HSIA, business tools, and more through the properties' LCD TVs. Plus it provides mechanisms that help management boost revenue.

Management implement the Roomlinx system at the 104-guestroom Grand Bohemian Hotel Asheville in North Carolina's Blue Ridge Mountains, and the 75-guestroom Bohemian Hotel Savannah in the city's historic Riverfront district.

Guests response has been very positive, and among the most popular features is the ability to surf the Internet with the system's wireless keyboard and mouse on a big-screen TV. This is something people don't do at home, and it's the most commonly mentioned in-room media feature on comment cards. The virtual concierge service is also extremely well received, and guests have noted that they appreciate the convenience of being able to browse the hotel services directory on the TV, including facility maps, room service menus, guest services and phone extensions.

An additional feature that attracted Kessler to Roomlinx was its ability to broadcast targeted in-room advertisements, thus opening up a new revenue stream for the hotel. Local businesses can purchase space to



advertise directly to guests via the in-room media. Management also regularly broadcasts ads about the hotels' facilities and can promote special offers, services, products/sales, and daily menu specials in restaurants and lounge entertainment.

Both new hotels opened with highly successful in-house ancillary business. After six months, they continue to outperform the ancillary business in The Kessler Collection's other properties, and management credits much of that success to the visibility gained through the in-room ads.

Complete Article at: tinyurl.com/iahi0210-04



Hotel Guest Internet Use Skyrockets

Despite challenging business conditions, Internet use by business and leisure guests at leading hotels, as measured by number of data packets per guest session traveling on iBahn's proprietary network, increased more than 50% in 2009.

iBahn, the worldwide leader in digital entertainment and Internet solutions for the hospitality and meeting industries, has released proprietary data showing two trends in hotel Internet usage: first, not only did the amount of data increase by 50% per guest session, but guests are spending 60% more time on the Internet, based on carefully tracked packet and session length information. These data confirm the predictions from an iBahn-commissioned, 2009 study of frequent business travelers conducted by Ypartnership, author of the closely-watched National Travel Monitor.

YPartnership discovered that more than two-thirds of frequent business travelers have downloaded music onto their computers (67%) while nearly 60% have downloaded video. Additionally, more than one-half have downloaded

news (54%) or entertainment (52%) onto their computers. Downloads of video and music consume considerably higher bandwidth and data than the average email or browsing session.

The implication of this trend for hoteliers is profound as it clearly points to the conclusion that the "free to guest" model of providing free access in all locations of the hotel at all times to all guests is economically unrealistic given guests' differing bandwidth needs. Because costs for bandwidth continue to increase exponentially, hoteliers will continue to see higher overall expenses related to their broadband offering, without commensurate benefits in either daily rates or occupancy. If the additional investment is not made, guest satisfaction with the internet service will decrease. Earlier studies have shown that guests will not return to hotels where they have an unsatisfactory Internet experience.

Complete Article at: tinyurl.com/iahi0210-06

Business travelers gain Net advantage; More are getting free Wi-Fi at hotels

Barbara DeLollis -- USA TODAY,

More business travelers are getting what they say they want most from hotels: free Internet access in their rooms.

Corporate business travel managers are taking advantage of the downturn in travel to negotiate the prized service, says DeAnne Dale, a sales executive at online business travel management firm Travelocity Business.

They're also getting free service from big hotel groups such as Hilton, Marriott and Starwood. And they're getting it at the same time the chains say they're not changing their policies and will continue to charge guests from \$9.95 to \$14.95 a day for Wi-Fi.

Some upscale hotels, such as Hyatt's new Andaz chain, are including it in their rates. Some others, such as Fairmont and Omni, provide it free to members of their loyalty programs.

Having a free Internet connection is something that corporate business managers say their travelers want most, Dale says.

But hotels, which are suffering from their worst year financially in more than 20, are reluctant to make Internet connections free for everyone.

"It's an easy way to make money," Toni Hinterstoisser, general manager of the Andaz Wall Street in New York, says of charging extra for the service. The cheapest room at the Andaz, which opened last week, costs \$275.

According to industry tracker Smith Travel Research, hotels had the worst performance in 2009 since Smith started tracking the industry in 1989. Upscale and luxury hotels suffered even more.

Revenue per available room, a common industry measure, fell 17% last year compared with 2008. Among the highest-priced hotels, it fell 24%.

Slashing room rates was mainly to blame for hotels' bleak performance, says Jan Freitag, a Smith executive. "Hoteliers have always been reluctant to include (Internet access)," Freitag says. "This might be a stop-gap measure to hold the slide of the rate."

However, Freitag says, hotels that include the service are able to pitch their prices in the same way that Southwest Airlines pitches the fact that, unlike many airlines, it doesn't charge extra for checking luggage -- it's included in the fare.

Henry Harteveltdt, a travel industry analyst at Forrester Research, says that it's time for hotels to drop Internet charges.

"Hotels realize that companies and individuals are fed up with paying extra for Wi-Fi," he says. "Consumers are smart enough to know the cost of providing it has come down."

Complete Article at: tinyurl.com/iahi0210-07



Hotel 1000 Quenches Guests' Thirst for More Bandwidth with 100MB Connection

Christina Volpe, Associate Editor

Located in the heart of downtown Seattle, [Hotel 1000](#) is a world class luxury hotel with the vibrant, urban energy of the city a few footsteps away. Known for leveraging innovative technology with sophisticated and luxurious accommodations to offer guests a truly customized experience, hotel management sought for a solution that would take its high speed Internet access to a whole new level.

"We were seeing near total bandwidth utilization when our property is fully occupied in both the guest rooms and the banquet space. There was no doubt that the thirst for more bandwidth would only increase in the weeks and months ahead, so we needed to be positioned for that growth now. The demands on bandwidth per person are significant, and we needed to push beyond what is considered to be sufficient and even robust bandwidth for a property of this size," says Matt Hagerman, hotel manager for Hotel 1000.

To quench guests' thirst for bandwidth and to ensure that the hotel would be prepared for future demands, Hotel 1000 worked with [XO Communications](#), a nationwide provider of advanced communication services for businesses, and several other technology partners, to install a fiber optics connection to the property, thereby enabling a 100MB connection to the already installed future proof internal fiber network. With this added connectivity, Hotel 1000's bandwidth has increased 20-fold and it is one of the first hotels in the U.S. to offer this type of broadband connectivity.

"We have used XO Communications for our data circuits

from the beginning and are happy with the services they provide," says Hagerman. "As bandwidth-intensive Web apps become more feature-rich and commonplace, we felt we needed the 100mb fiber connection to be able to provide excellent service and uptime for our guests well into the future. The continued march toward Web-based systems, increasing mobile devices, and multiple systems being integrated are all impacted by the upgrade today and with future needs. This upgrade was a necessity to maintain our brand and out-impeccable wired to serve' environment.

Hagerman describes the installation as a relatively smooth process, although it did take some time to complete. XO had to install the fiber between 2nd Avenue and the building, so permitting from the city took some time. After the physical installation, Hotel 1000 met several times with XO to devise a plan of action to ensure that the process would run smoothly and to test the equipment. "The circuit was actually live before we did the cutover, so the dominoes fell into place as expected on our "go live" date," says Hagerman, who also notes that the end result has been extremely positive.

"We can sell our technology focused brand with no hesitation that we [can] accommodate even the most bandwidth intensive users," says Hagerman. "We are now positioned to continue moving the end user experience forward on a number of fronts. The benefits are tangible and impact today and the potential future benefits are unlimited with the free flow of information that will remain available."

Complete Article at: tinyurl.com/iahi0210-08



Hotel WiFi Should Be a Right Not a Luxury

by [Sarah Lacy](#)

I'm in my hometown of Memphis, Tennessee for Christmas and on a drive between Memphis and Nashville I noticed that every \$30/night hotel offered free wireless Internet access. Further, when we got to Nashville and checked into the relatively low-frills Holiday Inn Express we had better wireless Internet access than I've had in hotels around the US and the world—some of which I paid double to stay in.

What gives with hotel WiFi? This is a ten-year-old technology that has improved in speed and quality nearly everywhere—in homes, in offices, in public spaces, in coffee shops, in airports—even on planes. You can even get free WiFi at Krystal, a fast food chain that's on par with White Castle and sells hamburgers for less than \$1 each. Over the past two years I've stayed at more than two-dozen hotels around the United States and the emerging world. I've noticed a trend that seems to fly in the face of basic economics and technology adoption: The pricier and fancier hotel, generally the worse quality the WiFi, if it exists at all.

On a trip to Boston two years ago my fancy downtown, five-star hotel had no wireless access. The brand new W in Santiago, Chile has no wireless access. In India, Rwanda and Argentina I've had to buy expensive 24-hour WiFi passes, which can add up to hundreds of dollars per stay, for a connection that was just OK. But I knew better than to complain: The quality of the connection is almost always better in emerging markets than Western Europe.

London is hands-down the worst: I've stayed at the Sanderson in London twice and always had a hard time getting online, and I've also stayed at the Malmaison where even the wired connection didn't work. I had to go down to the lobby to get a signal. Even then it was like the early days of wireless where you wandered around holding your laptop looking for bars like you were panning for gold.

Arrington may have his silly [germaphobe, fist-bump movement](#). MG may be [determined](#) to hold AT&T accountable for its embarrassingly bad iPhone service. Here's my outrage: Why in 2010 do so many hotels have zero, unreliable or outrageously expensive wireless Internet access?

This is clearly not a cost issue when economy hotels like Holiday Inn and Days Inn have no problem offering free wireless access from the middle of nowhere in the South. (Not to mention Krystal.) This is an issue of greed or tech ignorance on the part of luxury hotels and consumers and business travelers need to start showing some outrage.

On the greed point, Paul Carr—whose parents are hoteliers and lives in hotels now—says the sky-high prices are largely the result of hotels losing fees from business travelers making phone calls, now that we all have mobile phones. The only way to make up the cost was to start charging for Internet access. I wouldn't have a huge problem with that if the access was good. But I get angry when you charge me \$20 a day for a connection that barely works when I can get a better connection at a coffee shop next door for free.

Why not do what the Royal Orchid in Bangalore does? They offer a basic connection for free, and offer a paid rate if you want



a faster speed. That still allows a way for the hotel to make money off business travelers with expense accounts, gives guests who need a high-speed connection an in-room option and offers price-conscious guests a way to do the basics like checking email for free.

The other issue is technology. A lot of hotels—deeming themselves too tech-ignorant to install and manage wifi networks themselves—entered into pricey service relationships with third party providers. Hotels say it's those providers who saddle us with the high fees, and in my experience, not very good connectivity.

If hotels feel they absolutely can't manage these networks themselves, there have to be better options. What about big Web portals and search engines like Yahoo and Google, or for other countries the local equivalents? Google was ready to wire up all of San Francisco for free access in exchange for ad placement and a Google start page, why not do that for, say, a chain of boutique luxury hotels instead? Or at a minimum, outsource to a service like [Boingo](#) that is pretty consistent in service and that many travelers already have a subscription for anyway. It makes the fees hurt less when you can buy an annual pass that's also good at coffee shops, airports and other public spaces.

These are just a few ideas, and no doubt those of you with more experience setting up networks for big spaces have more. The Internet is fully woven into our lives now. It is the primary way people stay in touch, work and entertain themselves. There is no reason we shouldn't expect a decent—and preferably free—connection when we pay upwards of \$150/night for a hotel if a \$30/night hotel can offer it. I, for one, would forgo the pillow mints, free HBO and mini-shampoos if that helps with the margins.

Complete Article at: tinyurl.com/iahi0210-10

Hotels' new-tech TVs have guests fuming

"Most hotels seem loath to spend the extra money for the high-def service from the cable or satellite provider, so what's the point?" says Young, who works in the aerospace industry. "I will not return to any hotel if they have high-def TVs but no high-def signal."

Better picture quality coming

Several big hotel chains are upgrading the receivers and other related equipment, and guests should be seeing better picture quality this year or next, Ginsberg says.

Marriott International spokesman John Wolf says the chain's JW Marriott, Marriott and Renaissance brands have high-definition TVs in 75% of their rooms and require at least 45 channels, including 14 high-definition ones, at each hotel. Marriott's other brands — Courtyard, Residence Inn, Fairfield Inn & Suites, TownePlace Suites and SpringHill Suites — have high-definition TVs in 40% of rooms and at least 35 channels, including 14 high-definition.

Gustaaf Schrijs, a vice president for the InterContinental Hotel Group, says about 30% of the rooms in the U.S. under the group's seven hotel brands have flat-screen, high-definition TV sets. And all rooms will have them by the end of next year, he says. InterContinental's brands include Holiday Inn Hotels and Crowne Plaza Hotels & Resorts.

Hilton Worldwide estimates that about half of its brands' 586,000 hotel rooms have flat-panel TV sets, and the rest will get them and high-definition programming by the middle of next year, Vice President Josh Weiss says. The chain, which has such brands as Embassy Suites and Hampton, requires its hotels to install high-definition TVs and high-definition programming at the same time, he says.

Frequent business traveler Michael Foster, a management consultant from Qualicum Beach, British Columbia, stayed this month at the Hilton in Rockville, Md., and was impressed by the picture quality. He says TVs mean a lot to business travelers.

"For the frequent traveler, a hotel room is often a home

away from home," he says. "A TV can make it feel a little more like home and provide company."

Some content 'still lacking'

New technology has made it possible for travelers to watch TV in their hotel rooms without worrying about the quality of a hotel's set or channels.

Mark Cohen of Chesterfield, Mo., bought a Slingbox, a device that lets him watch the channels on his home TV or recorded shows in his hotel room on a laptop computer. He particularly enjoys watching his favorite baseball team, the St. Louis Cardinals.

Business travelers also can carry a digital media player, such as a Roku, and connect it to a hotel TV set. With proper cables and an adequate Internet connection, they can watch Netflix movies, Major League Baseball games or other shows.

A digital video recorder is a gadget that frequent traveler Avi Rosenthal would like to see at every hotel. Rosenthal, vice president of an energy management company in Harrisburg, Pa., says he often misses national news shows when traveling and would like to record them to view later in his room.

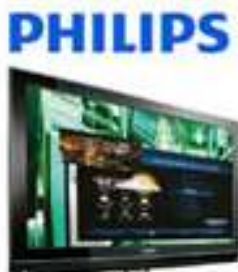
Joseph Valha of Aurora, Ill., enjoys flat-screen TVs but says there's not enough available programming.

"Content is still lacking," says the senior vice president in the computer equipment industry. "I'm craving more channels and HD signals, and would change my hotel preferences if a brand offered 50-plus channels and HD signals."

Cyndi McKinney of St. Louis is also dissatisfied with programming.

"Hotels continue to be under the impression that men are the only travelers," says McKinney, president of a market research consulting company. "How about switching one of the six to eight sports channels for a little Food (Network) or HGTV?"

Complete Article at: tinyurl.com/iahi0210-17



California outlaws large, power-hungry TVs

In a move that could spell the end of the plasma TV industry as we know it, the state of California agreed today to enact strict regulations on the amount of power televisions can consume, [effectively outlawing most large plasma TVs as of January 1, 2011](#), with many more televisions set to be banned beginning January 1, 2013.

The state [had been concerned](#) that 10 percent of a home's energy use is typically devoted to the TV and its related equipment, and that percentage has been increasing as consumers gain access to larger and larger (and cheaper and cheaper) televisions, which command an ever-increasing hunger for power.

The new rules go into effect a little more than a year from now: On January 1, 2011, televisions will be required to reduce energy consumption by an average of 33 percent. In 2013, a second tier of restrictions will go into effect, with average energy consumption required to be reduced by 49 percent vs. today's levels.

Rest assured, this doesn't mean the end of the television as we know it. As the California Energy Commission notes, as of now, over 1,000 televisions already meet the 2011 standards, so many manufacturers won't have to panic in order to comply with the regulations, at least for now.

Those who will be heavily affected are manufacturers who make televisions that draw more than their fair share of juice. A formula related to the size of the TV's screen in square inches will be used to determine the maximum power draw allowed by a TV. For example, Panasonic's 54-

inch VIERA plasma TV would be allowed to draw 281 watts of power in "on mode." Today that set is rated to draw 293 watts of power. Smaller plasmas are generally OK under the 2011

specs, but virtually all of them fall short when put up against the 2013 rules. That same 54-inch plasma will be required to draw only 175 watts once 2013 arrives, a power reduction that just might not be possible.

Bottom line: Most LCD televisions will be safe under the 2011 law, and many plasmas will as well, but come 2013, everyone's going to have to do some serious belt-tightening.

All told, the new rules are expected to save 6,515 Gigawatt-hours annually in the state, save the state \$8.7 billion in costs for additional power plants, and save consumers \$8.1 billion a year in lower energy bills.

One additional point of note: The new rules currently don't apply to very large TVs, those of 1,400 square inches or larger (roughly a 58" set), although rules are likely to be enacted against these ultra-large sets in the second phase of this legislation.

Complete Article at: tinyurl.com/iahi0210-12



IT'S ALL ABOUT THE OUTLETS

USB power outlets for the home; why didn't we think of this?

Posted by Andrew Nusca

We have USB outlets on our computers, we have them on our new HDTVs, we even have them in our cars.

Why the heck don't we just put 'em right into the wall?

For \$10, you can do just that. True Power [will ship these bad boys in 2010](#), which allow for two USB charging ports alongside two traditional U.S. three-prong power plugs.

"Perfect for charging any USB powered device including mobile, iPod, iPhone, PDA, MP3, PSP, MP4 player & digital camera," the site says. My iPod touch would approve.

For the electricians out there, specs are as follows:

Input voltage: AC 100 to 240V 50/60Hz
USB input current: 80mA
Output voltage: USB: DC 5.0V 600mA
Operation temperature: -15 to 45 Degrees Celsius
Relative humidity: < 95%
Air pressure: 86 to 106kPa



The company says the USB ports only draw power when something is physically connected to the port. "We didn't want a vampire port that continually sucks and wastes power when not in use," the company says.

Complete Article at: tinyurl.com/iahi0210-13

IT'S ALL ABOUT THE OUTLETS

Readers to hotels: Give us more convenient power outlets!

By Hickson Chen

Do you find enough conveniently located power outlets in your hotel room?

If you're like most travelers these days, you probably leave home equipped with all sorts of electronic gadgets - whether a Bluetooth headset; Blackberry, iPhone or Palm; laptop; hair straightener or electric razor or maybe your kids' DVD player or (with our family) their iPod Touches and Nintendo DS players. But Hotel Check-In readers say that hotels often overlook this fact.

Hotel Check-In reader [WetFeetTheNovel](#) recently raised the topic in the discussion area called the [Forum](#), and I figured it's worth broadening the discussion...

Reader [WetFeetTheNovel](#) had just returned from a Doubletree Hotel, which they enjoyed more than they'd imagined. The hotel, in fact, exceeded their expectations from the great shower to room service. But?

But when it came time to plug in the laptop computer, cell phone charges, or camera batteries...whoops! Now the traveler has to move furniture or unplug table lamps. Just an idea for hotel designers and renovators. We need power. Power to the travelers! Outlets positioned above end tables or desks would add to the convenience and accessibility.

Reader [SezWho](#) echoed those sentiments in a Forum post, saying that power outlets is a major pet peeve. [SezWho](#) wrote that he travels with his laptop, phone, headset, iPod, camera, razor and Cellpod (battery backup) - and that excludes what his wife and family bring when they travel together.

When my wife and I enter a hotel room, the first thing I look for is the outlets while she checks out the bathroom. It is amazing to me how many of these 'renovated' hotels seem to forget the need for power outlets. Obviously they don't think like the guests they claim they are trying to serve...Are you listening, hotels?

Reader Hickson Chen also wrote me saying that "there's never enough of them by the work desk." He looks for four or give outlets to plug in his laptop, Blackberry, personal phone and Bluetooth headset and possibly a personal game system. He ends up charging his electronics in a few different places. He also raised another problem:

Sometimes, hotels have bad placements of outlets. Just recently, I stayed at the (Aloft Hotel in) Dallas. They have electrical outlets just behind the bathroom sink faucet maybe three or four inches away! I was scared to get electrocuted when I was washing my face and water splashed on the socket plate!

[Benét Wilson](#), an online managing editor at Aviation Week Group, said her "dream hotel" in terms of plentiful and

convenient outlets remains the Grand Hyatt at Dallas-Fort Worth. "I still have tears come to my eyes when I think about it," she joked. But in nine out of 10 hotel stays, her hotel room doesn't have enough outlets where she needs them, she told me.

By Barbara De Lollis

Solutions

So what can we do when we're in a hotel room that has too few power outlets?

Wilson said that she always travels with her Belkin Mini

Notebook Surge Protector with Built-In USB Charger, which she bought for about \$15 at Wal-Mart. It rotates and fits in tight spaces, plus she uses it to charge her laptop and cell phone, and uses the USB plugs for her iPod and iPod Touch.

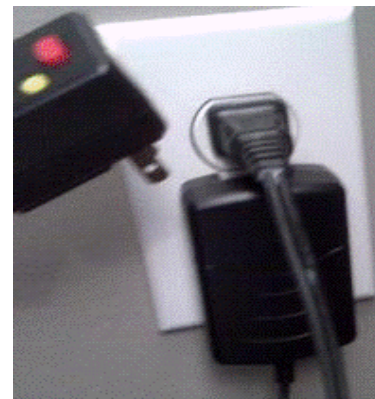
[SezWho](#) wrote that five-star hotels usually provide the most outlets. But if he's staying in a less luxurious hotel, he travels with his own extension cord and unplugs lamps to free up outlet space. With his laptop booted, he's usually able to charge a couple of other items through the USB ports.

Not perfect, but making the best of what is always a difficult situation.

Readers: Do you usually find enough power outlets - in convenient areas - in your hotel room? Which hotels do the best job when it comes to providing adequate access to power outlets? Please include name names (Marriott? Courtyard? Hilton? Embassy Suites? Hotel Monaco?) and locations.

Hoteliers: Why are power outlets still so hard to get right?

Complete Article at: tinyurl.com/iahi0210-14



A TABLET WITH A FLAIR

The iPad is Coming to a Hotel Near You!

by [Geoff Duncan](#) by Terence Ronson

Finally after months of speculation, the iPad by Apple has been launched and most definitely, will be seen in operational use by Hotels – the question is – “as what”?

We've seen the somewhat clunky growth of in-room check-in powered by convertible notebooks that operate over Wi-Fi networks where allowed by the often tightly controlled security policies of Hotel groups. How will the iPad change that? With a good size screen, the eReg card with signature capture is now totally viable and PMS companies need to address this. Not only is it customer friendly, it's also environmentally friendly since it eliminates paper and storage.

Will we see the device used as electronic menus which allow for full hi-res graphics of food items, or even wine lists that give Wikipedia like info about the vintage and vineyards, perhaps even access to a membership club where you can store and share tasting notes.

Housekeeping could window up realistic images of hotel rooms and use them to notify the relevant departments for maintenance defects by simply touching a graphical image of the defective item.

Security departments could use 9.7 inch Tablet to interact with the CCTV system via Wi-Fi for interrogation of a specific zone, or follow a potential suspect in real time as they meander through the

building.

Sales and Marketing departments can really go to town with these machines and take them on the road for presentations, and connectivity back to on-property systems for immediate booking availability and confirmations. No longer will Sales people complain about the weight of such a device since it weighs in at only 1.5Lbs.

And how will the guest use these devices? Of course they will want to hook onto your HSIA infrastructure and suck up the bandwidth. Your existing policy of just allowing one or two connections per room will be challenged especially with guests toting a Notebook, iPhone and iPad – all needing HSIA access – what will you do now? You may very well ask - Will they carry all three? Likelihood is yes – since they do different things and compliment each other. Better get ready for this!

So come March when the iPad hits the street and millions will be sold to people you'd love as Guests, how will your Hotel be iPad ready?

Complete Article at: tinyurl.com/iahi0210-15



IS YOUR FACEBOOK SAFE

Network Flaw Causes Web Error

By Jordan Robertson January 18, 2010 - SAN Francisco (AP)

A Georgia mother and her two daughters logged onto Facebook from mobile phones last weekend and wound up in a startling place: strangers' accounts with full access to troves of private information.

The glitch — the result of a routing problem at the family's wireless carrier, AT&T — revealed a little known security flaw with far reaching implications for everyone on the Internet, not just Facebook users.

In each case, the Internet lost track of who was who, putting the women into the wrong accounts. It doesn't appear the users could have done anything to stop it. The problem adds a dimension to researchers' warnings that there are many ways online information — from mundane data to dark secrets — can go awry.

Several security experts said they had not heard of a case like this, in which the wrong person was shown a Web page whose user name and password had been entered by someone else. It's not clear whether such episodes are rare or simply not reported. But experts said such flaws could occur on e-mail services, for instance, and that something similar could happen on a PC, not just a phone.

"The fact that it did happen is proof that it could potentially happen again and with something a lot more important than Facebook," said Nathan Hamiel, founder of the Hexagon Security Group, a research organization.

Candace Sawyer, 26, says she immediately suspected something was wrong when she tried to visit her Facebook page Saturday morning.

After typing Facebook.com into her Nokia smartphone, she was taken into the site without being asked for her user name or password. She was in an account that didn't look like hers. She had fewer friend requests than she remembered. Then she found a picture of the page's owner.

"He's white — I'm not," she said with a laugh.

Sawyer logged off and asked her sister, Mari, 31, her partner in a dessert catering company, and their mother, Fran, 57, to see whether they had the same problem on their phones.

Mari landed inside another woman's page.

Fran's phone -which had never been used to access Facebook before- took her inside yet another stranger's page, one belonging to a young woman from Indiana. They sent an e-mail to one of their own accounts to prove it.

They were dumbfounded.

"I thought it was the phone — 'Maybe this phone is just weird and does magical, horrible things and I have to get rid of it,'" said Candace Sawyer.

The women, who live together in East Point, Ga., outside Atlanta, had recently upgraded to the same model of phone and all used the same carrier, AT&T. Sawyer contacted The

(Continued on page 18)

Network Flaw Causes Web Error (cont)

(Continued from page 17)

Associated Press after reporting the problem to Facebook and AT&T.

The problem wasn't in the phones. It was a flaw in the infrastructure connecting the phones to the Internet. That illuminates a grave problem.

Generally Web sites and computers are compromised from within. A hacker can get a Web page or computers to run programming code that they shouldn't. But in this case, it was a security gap between the phone and the Web site that exposed strangers' Facebook pages to the Sawyers. Misconfigured equipment, poorly written network software or other technical errors could have caused AT&T to fumble the information flowing from the Sawyers' phones to Facebook and back.

Fortunately, Hamiel said, the vulnerability would be of limited use to a hacker interested in pulling off widespread mayhem, because this hole would let him access only one account at a time. To do more damage the criminal would have to pull off the unlikely feat of gaining full control of the piece of equipment that routes Internet traffic to individual users.

AT&T spokesman Michael Coe said its wireless customers have landed in the wrong Facebook pages in "a limited number of instances" and that a network problem behind those episodes is being fixed.

The Sawyers experienced a different glitch. Coe said an investigation points to a "misdirected cookie." A cookie is a file some Web sites place on computers to store identifying information — including the user name that Facebook members would enter to access their pages. Coe said technicians couldn't figure out how the cookie had been routed to the wrong phone, leading it into the wrong Facebook account.

He also said AT&T could confirm only that the problem occurred on one of the Sawyers' phones, possibly because they had logged off Facebook on the other two before reporting the incident.

Facebook declined to comment and referred questions to AT&T.

Some Web sites would be immune from this kind of mix-up, particularly those that use encryption. A Web browser would have trouble deciphering the encryption on a page that a computer user didn't actually seek, said Chris Wysopal, co-founder of Veracode, a security company.

Sensitive sites and those used for banking and e-commerce generally use encryption. But most other sites, including some Web-based e-mail services, don't use it. One way of checking: The Web addresses of encrypted sites begin with "https" rather than "http." Facebook uses encryption when user names and passwords are entered, to cloak the sign-on from snoops, but after the credentials are entered the encryption is dropped.

It's unclear how many people were affected by the problem the

Sawyers discovered, and whether it was limited to Facebook.

The reason all three women experienced the glitch is a function of the way cellular networks are designed. In some cases, all the mobile Internet traffic for a particular area is routed through the same piece of networking equipment.

If that piece of equipment is misbehaving or set up incorrectly, strange things happen when computers down the line receive the data.

Usually that means a Web site simply won't load, said Alberto Solino, director of security consulting services for Core Security Technologies. In the Sawyers' case, "somehow they got the wrong user but they could keep using that account for a long period of time. That's what's strange," he said.

The AP tried to contact two of the people whose Facebook pages were exposed to the Sawyers, but the calls and e-mails were not returned. It's unclear whether they are also AT&T customers, though security experts said that's likely the case.

Indeed, it was the case in a similar incident in November.

Stephen Simburg, 25, who works in marketing, was home for Thanksgiving in Vancouver, Wash., when he logged onto Facebook from his cell phone. He didn't recognize the people who had written him messages.

"I thought I had gotten really popular all of a sudden, or something was wrong," he said. Then he saw the picture of the account owner: A young woman.

He got her e-mail address from the site, logged off and wrote the woman a message. He asked whether he had met her at some point and she had borrowed his phone to check her Facebook account.

"No," she wrote back, "but I was just telling my family that I ended up in your profile!"

Simburg and the woman figured out they were both using AT&T to access Facebook on their phones. (AT&T had no comment because the incident wasn't reported to the company.)

"I felt like I had been let down by the phone company and by Facebook," he said.

He says he has put the incident behind him. But one piece of it remains: He and the young woman are now Facebook friends.

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