

TECHNOLOGY EVOLVES

CES 2009: THE YEAR OF THE TOUCHSCREEN

A quick walk through the halls and it's clear that touchscreen technology has become a major player in the world of trade show activation. It's no longer about monitor-based, ATM-style kiosks that tell a mere single story—touchscreens allow exhibitors to present visitors with multiple layers of information in a wide variety of formats. Projection-based systems allow any pane of glass to become a touch interface, and new software is bringing elements such as embedded video to the touch realm. Four examples of brands

using touch to tell their stories:

Intel. At the center of the brand's booth is an interactive island display featuring four projection-based touchscreens displayed on large, vertical panes of clear glass. The technology allows visitors to explore the speed and capabilities of Intel's newest processors while navigating through a virtual digital environment in real time. A translucent film mounted onto the glass panels senses touch and displays enough of the projected image to get the message

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LG UNLEASHED

ELECTRONICS LEADER UNVEILS ALL-NEW FOOTPRINT ON THE CES SHOW FLOOR

LG yesterday uncorked an all-new footprint, a 22,000-square-foot space boasting a sleek, minimal color palette and a traffic flow-oriented design that makes one of the show's most massive spaces an intuitive and manageable experience.

The red "ribbon" of carpet along the floor subtly keeps traffic patterns moving in the right directions, and several pods highlight key products on elegant backdrops designed to be as approachable as possible for attendees. Design and build: Sparks (sparksonline.com). A



taste of the action from our tour of one of the new exhibits at CES:

TV Walls. Rows of flat-screens serve as the main attractions, enticing attendees into the footprint. Two walls, one comprised of 35 screens, the other boasting more than 50, face out to the show floor. Carefully designed media adds an aura of excitement throughout.

Home Theaters. Five rooms showcase LG products in spaces that reflect the tastes and style of a broad range of users. One has an upscale retro feel, while another, with plush leather couches, gives off a high-end, urban bachelor pad vibe.

Pure HD Sound Theater. Sleek and white, the soundproof room offers a respite from the craziness of the trade show floor. Attendees can come and

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MAKING CONNECTIONS

GOING BEYOND TRADITIONAL SOCIAL MEDIA TOOLS

While many an exhibitor or event marketer have been jumping on the Twitter and Facebook bandwagons, some are making investments in their own proprietary social networking initiatives—online offerings designed to connect professionals with other professionals. Such assets are often customized and tied into registration systems, so attendees are pushed into social networking as soon as they sign up.

At Adobe Max, the company reinforced its theme—Connect.Discover.Inspire.—through an online Adobe Developer Community website. Adobe got the conversation rolling at registration. The system then uses different colored pins to place attendees with similar interests on a grid. The closer your pin is to an

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THE TWITTERATI

A SNIPPET OF YESTERDAY'S BEST CES TWEETS

@hansveld: My favorite hangout at #CES is always the Gibson tent. Great place to sit down and play some kick-ass guitar.

@kodakcb: Drew Carey is in our booth. Got pics for our blog. He is awesome.

@jimmyfallon: Consumer Electronic Show happening in Vegas - so is Adult Entertainment Expo. Double entendre jokes? Come on give me a few!!!

@jimtsurugi: So far, the coolest thing I've seen is the Nvidia 3D demo of left 4 dead. Cost prohibitive, but damn that was fun.

@AllisonCarney: OMG Tom Hanks is on stage at the Sony keynote! #CES09 I love this man.

Follow us at twitter.com/TechEM to receive pics, insights and more, live from the CES show floor. Tweet tweet!!



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across visually, while maintaining the see-through look and feel of the glass surface.—**Booth 7153**

Microsoft. Its new Surface technology is widely considered to be the next big thing in touch-based interactive experiences, and Microsoft is wisely making the most of it in its booth. A dozen Surface-powered touch-

screens serve as virtual guides to the exhibit footprint, allowing visitors to explore the seven zones within the booth and the technologies highlighted in each. A map of the footprint invites visitors to touch the zone they are interested in (Windows, mobility, TV, gaming, music, automotive, or productivity). From there they can use Surface to explore the Microsoft offerings within the product zone on their own, through moving graphics and embedded video shorts. A cool map graphic in the upper right of the screen shows where they are in the virtual exhibit, so no one gets lost.—**Booth 7144**

MTI. The brand's merchandising display products leverage interactive technologies such as RFID and touchscreens—visitors pick up a digital camera from a display, and its specs pop

up on a touchscreen right in front of them. From there they can search for similar products and compare features via the touch interface. An RFID-based display works similarly, activating when a product is lifted off the display. The best part? The software keeps track of visitor interactions, so quantifiable results are just a touch away.—**Booth 8435**

LG Electronics. The booth's Touch & User Interface Zone allows visitors to pick up one of the brand's new wireless phones and learn about all of its cool capabilities through touchscreens. Pick up an LG Dare or Renoir and dig deeper using touchscreen demos of the music, TV, web and camera functions. A large-format touch presentation behind the four demo stands takes the presentation to a larger audience.—**Booth 8214**

LG UNLEASHED

ELECTRONICS LEADER UNVEILS ALL-NEW CES EXPERIENCE

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relax in the plush surroundings and chill to the dulcet sounds of an orchestra via a flat-screen TV.

Mobile Communications Area. LG highlights its mobile communications products via a setup designed almost as a booth-within-the-booth. Here, the already upscale booth kicks it up a notch, incorporating black glossy surfaces into a footprint that's primarily red and white. Attendees can check out the sound quality of LG's phones in listening pods, red-and-white ball chairs with headphones attached to the mobile devices on display. And product displays showcasing the brand's designer phone for Prada and its much buzzed-about watch phone mimic high-end jewelry store window environments.

Connected Home. Elevated from the rest of the show floor, the Connected Home space features an open layout incorporating LG's products in a variety of living spaces. The message: See how LG products are integrated seamlessly and wirelessly in a high-tech living environment.

Eco Home. Attendees can check out how the company's eco-friendly products compare to their regular counterparts; a digital display shows how much wattage each product uses.

Want to check it out? For a tour of the LG experience (booth 8214), email jhawley@sparksonline.com.

MAKING CONNECTIONS

GOING BEYOND TRADITIONAL SOCIAL MEDIA

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attendee, the more you have in common with that person and the more likely it is you'll want to connect with them. Get it? Through the system, attendees can make plans with other attendees before the event day.

"We tailored the questions [that attendees answered when registering] to their profiles by title, job description and hobbies," says Margaret Pfeiffer, senior manager-corporate events at Adobe. "It was valuable for them but it also helped us get to know our audience a little better to make the event a success."

The system was also an efficient way to keep everybody connected on site. Adobe set up kiosks where people could log on to use the website and check for messages from other attendees. The website also included forums and postings from Adobe on any changes to content at the event.

At Cisco's Networkers conference in Barcelona, the company added a social networking component for the first time, with much success. "It helped people find others to interact with, and it facilitated [communication] between attendees and speakers," says David Chalmers, senior manager-Internet marketing at Cisco. "Often there is limited interaction between the attendees and the speakers, so this helped carry a dialogue between the two, during and after the event."

The bulk of Cisco's attendees are large-enterprise companies that demand access to the latest information in the tech market. Cisco can more speedily meet their demands with a year-round communication hub via the social networking website. "The longer term goal is to create a community of people who want to know about Cisco's technology on an ongoing basis," says Chalmers.

LEVERAGING THE INTERNET

CES EXHIBITORS AMPLIFY ON-SITE BOOTHS WITH SHOW-SPECIFIC WEB SITES

The growing trend of integrating trade shows with online assets is alive and well at this year's CES, as a number of exhibitors connect booths with show-specific websites and blog pages. Many are using CES-flavored sites to amplify their show footprints, push booth traffic and communicate with relevant targets not attending the show itself. The sites range from simple sections that spring from traditional homepages to full-blown custom microsites.

Homepage Sections. CES content planted on subsections of main homepages have been popping up for several months leading up to the show, allowing attendees a place to learn about booth activities before the floor opened. At panasonic.com/promos/ces/2009, for instance, the electronics company displays booth diagrams with info, daily videos from the exhibit, product high-

lights and a show blog.

Blogs. Exhibitors are trying to generate a little organic buzz at CES, with many enlisting dedicated bloggers or blog networks to create chatter about show happenings and booth activities. Kodak, for example, is keeping corporate chief blogger Jennifer Cisney busy, posting away about all things CES at pluggedin.kodak.com.



Portals. Big CES portals keep getting bigger, with some exhibitors boasting stand-alone sites (check microsoft.com/ces or blackberry.com/ces) containing everything from streaming videos to virtual walk-throughs and digital presentations. Most notable this year is Sony's sony.com/ces extravaganza, featuring live video postings, exhibit-to-web news, a booth overview and a real-time schedule.

Social Networking. Others have taken commercial equity out of the equation and opted for "community" sites with which attendees talk, post, share and chat about all things electronics. Witness Intel's just-launched consumerelectronicsinsider.com, an aggregate site for news, posts, blogs and feeds combining every major social media platform with a localized way for attendees to share or learn.

HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE CES FLOOR

Demos that rock, data collection that delivers and experiences that are truly one of a kind. Meet the superstars of South Halls Three and Four.

Qualcomm. Our early bird special award goes to Qualcomm for kick-starting day one with the intoxicating aroma of free coffee. While other exhibitors were still wrangling cords and unpacking exhibitory, the Big Q was drawing a sizeable line of attendees with its full-service espresso bar. Besides a massive dose of free caffeine, Qualcomm delivered on another CES rarity: a sense of calm. Tall bamboo shoots set in rock-filled planters serve as airy backdrops for demo stations covered with silk-screened awnings. Tree leaf, branch and other natural element silhouettes featured on the illuminated blue two-story back wall structure and awnings tie in the natural theme. Weary gadget heads can grab some "me" time at one of four massage chairs. Lest the whole thing be too Zen (as in sleepy) friendly staffers toss mini footballs around and invite passersby to grab some free java. — *Booth 30320*

Creative Labs. Creative's "Are you smarter than a technophobe?" game expertly taps into attendees' insatiable desire to know it all by challenging them on their technology mojo. One attendee is invited up to play a game that's part

The Price is Right and part Jeopardy. An emcee trades barbs with a sassy female co-host while a third guy manning the on-screen action disperses brand information. This lively presentation delivers product features and benefits by deftly breaking them down into bits and bites the audience can absorb. By 9:30 a.m., crowds on day one packed the booth's nine benches and spilled out into the aisles. — *Booth 30651*

SanDisk. If you're a CES regular, you'll recognize SanDisk's perennial presenter and magician, Scott Tokar. His show expertly blends improv comedy, impressive magic tricks, audience participation, product points and an easygoing, everyman appeal into a seamless 30-minute shot of entertainment. New this year, SanDisk is mixing Tokar's act with an Ultimate Rock Band 2 contest, further increasing audience participation. The on-stage fun ties into SanDisk's main product push for 2009—preloaded slotMusic and slotRadio cards that store tunes and Rock Band Games. — *Booth 30659*

BlackBerry. In the battle of the glossy white booths, BlackBerry gets our best-of vote. The company is utilizing RFID to turn an eye-catching booth into a killer data collection machine. Attendees swipe CES cards at reg and are issued branded RFID cards. They're then invited to hold

the cards up to any of 44 access points throughout the booth if they'd like to get more information from any of BlackBerry's partners. At the end of the day, visitors get emails from just the partners that piqued their interest. The strategy puts attendees in control, delivers leads to partners without any backend data sorting and gives BlackBerry rich information about who attended, when and for how long. — *Booth 36206*

HP. Visitors coming in for some quality time at the HP booth can sign up to direct their own stop-motion movie by arranging figurines in various poses on a mini studio set, complete with a two-foot stage and red velvet curtains. An artist runs the camera and attendees take home the vid on a flash drive. At a digital makeover photo station, attendees can sit for a headshot and have their images transformed by a professional artist. Choices include an aging version of you, Benjamin Button-style, or you as an animal, a la the cowardly lion. The final images are finished in sepia tone to give them a unique, vintage effect, and are printed out side by side on a HP printer for guests to take home. The overall experience is leveraging the skills of artists featured in Engine Room, a global online series co-created with MTV, on which international teams of designers are challenged in a reality TV setting. — *Booth 31112*

MEASUREMENT STRATEGIES

CROSS-PROGRAM METRICS HELP EXHIBITORS GET THE MOST OUT OF PORTFOLIOS

Events and trade shows are hardly apples and oranges. Live programs, shows, mobile tours, seminars and conferences all need to be evaluated on a standard set of criteria. So if you're going to get the most out of your events, you'll need cross-program measurement initiatives—metrics that enable you to compare which types of events are most effective.

Cross-program measurement gives a basis for deciding what percentage of a spend is best allocated to different types of events. "It only makes sense to understand how the different elements of the portfolio compare," says Joe Spaccarelli, former senior director of corporate events at Symbol Technologies. "If someone [in our company] comes to [our team] and says they want to achieve 'X,' we need to be able to tell them which types of events are likely to be the

best fit."

Five tips for making the most of a cross-event measurement effort:

1. Ask the Questions. First things first: start by understanding what you want to learn by measuring across the portfolio. Get started by picking five questions and look for the data that will give you the answers.

2. Standardize On-site Data. To get data you can slice and dice during your cross-measurement analysis—as well as compare trade shows to conferences and road tours—standardize some of the data you collect at events. There's no use in trying to measure elements with different comparable values.

3. Systemize Your Process. Measurement gurus urge you to automate the process. Build a system that lets you input data into a master database. This speeds the process and cuts costs.



4. -Existing Data as Benchmarks. Data averages can be used to create benchmarks and performance standards.

5. Slice and Dice. Use the master database to evaluate how different events perform on a standard set of objectives. Then, delve deeper by slicing data by event type, audience demographic, or geographic region.

THE LOOK AND FEEL OF CES EXHIBIT DESIGN HIGHLIGHTS FROM DAY ONE

Edifier Enterprises. The design is a study in contrast of shape and color, with hard lines and a bright white motif offset by curved product stands and jet black electronics. All architecture and carpeting in the space is brilliant white, and a large, open box frame structure houses a second deck meeting space. Angular walls and a white L-shaped stairway contrast low, curved product stands that sport the brand's high-end audio products in high-gloss, jet black finishes—the only black elements in an all-white space.—*Booth 25917*

Bowers & Wilkins. An X-shaped structural layout is done up in two shades of high-gloss grey with natural wood highlights in this upscale booth environ. Open monolith-style wall structures feature embedded lighting, illuminated graphic panels and demo stands beneath. Graphic messaging next to wall-mounted displays help explain the brand's high-end audio products, and smooth stone pathways embedded under glass are a nice touch. A rotating fabric cylinder ID sign above the footprint draws the eye from across the show floor.—*Booth 20558*

Peerless Mounts. Uplift, box-framed walls feature see-through scrim fabric graphics of home surroundings and the brand's mounting systems in action. A super-scale fabric graphic wall depicting a sports bar wraps one side of the footprint. Super-cool: An innovative suspended high ID sign is comprised of two fabric cube structures—the exterior cube is wrapped in see-through scrim with the brand's logo printed on it, while the interior cube is wrapped in bright red fabric to create a cool visual effect.—*Booth 21740*

Shure. A dj booth in one of the exhibit's corners is surrounded by a series of square, brushed metal bars with small monitors facing the aisle running product demo clips. Larger monitors behind the booth show the schedule and the brand's mics in action. Round-edged demo stands are done up in a carbon fiber motif and separated by colorful Plexi graphic panels. Self-illuminated graphics are spread throughout the exhibit, and a second deck features plenty of space for private conversations and demonstrations.—*Booth 21532*

Giinii International. The brand's digital picture frames are innovatively displayed on the exterior walls of the space. Panel walls with images of picture frames are interspersed with actual Giinii frames, making for a cool effect. Superscale fabric graphics line the footprint, and private meeting/demo areas inside are topped with fabric canopies. A large fabric wall behind the greeting desk sports more gigantic graphics, while another exterior wall is lined with mirrors to play off the brand's "C-U, C-Me" technology.—*Booth 21244*

Dolby. The company's Surround Sound Theater (where the latest and greatest in home theater audio is displayed) is enough to keep visitors lined up each year, but the booth's new Technology Showcase Zone is done up in white with LED-embedded walls. The LED cubes run a series of colorful graphics and messages behind translucent covers, while a calm chiming soundtrack is what sets the mood. A gigantic fabric graphic ID sign is flanked by a big high-def LED board running video and messaging.—*Booth 20901*