

## Vegas spectacle trumpets latest tech wizardry

**Steve Makris**

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LAS VEGAS - The 2007 International Consumer Electronics Show is a showcase for new technologies for the home, office and vehicle. This is where the coolest new consumer discoveries have their debut under the watchful eyes of industry observers, peers and the thousands of buyers for small and large stores, including Canadian retailers.

According to recent Consumer Electronic Association research, revenue growth in North America in 2006 was pegged at 13 per cent, exceeding expectations.

But 2007 expectations are down to seven per cent, representing a slowing industry trend due to the diminishing effects of the current crop of innovations, according to the CEA. Although volume sales may be down, high prices of electronic goods are expected to boost revenue in North America to more than \$170 billion US.

The hottest electronic item for 2007 is TV -- big and small flat panels and traditional CRT tube sets -- with 2007 revenues estimated at \$29 billion.

Some new gizmos don't make it much farther than the CES show floor but many will find their way to consumers looking for new ways to do things.

Let's take a look at some of my favourites. (All prices in US)

1. Sharp had top bragging rights with its 108 inch diagonal Aquos LCD screen, currently the world's largest LCD flat panel TV. The High Definition gigantic display features full 1080P resolution but won't be at stores near you soon. [www.sharp.ca](http://www.sharp.ca)

2. The MC3 SportVue wireless heads-up colour display from [www.motionresearch.com](http://www.motionresearch.com) , US \$249, features a sleek eye-level helmet mounted visor that shows key motorcycle information like speed and gear selection. It receives the data wirelessly from a small transmitter hooked up to the bike's information system.

3. Cloth keyboards may not be in fashion yet, but the ElekTex washable and Bluetooth wireless keyboard works with similarly equipped phones and PDAs, available at BestBuy for \$130. It uses smart fabric technologies from [www.eleksen.com](http://www.eleksen.com), a company that specializes in embedding controls for MP3 players and PDAs in fabric and leather in new clothing designs.

**4. Can't get to your voicemail quietly? For \$10 a month [www.Simulscribe.com](http://www.Simulscribe.com) , also available in Canada, takes over your personal or company voicemail and instantly converts it into text, passing it on to your e-mail. You get 40 no-volume limit text-converted voice messages and 25 cents per additional voice message. The software- translated text is sent to your cell or PDA, but you can also hear and manage your voice messages online as company CEO James Siminoff shows.**

5. Lawrence Neill from [www.xantrex.com](http://www.xantrex.com) in Burnaby B.C., holds the PowerSource Mobile 100, left, \$149, a portable rechargeable battery that can run a small laptop for several hours. It includes two USB ports for charging phones and MP3 players as well. The smaller Mobile Mini, \$59.99 directly charges smaller devices via USB from desktop or laptops.