

Las Vegas' CES wrapped up in 'paper' computers

This year's international Consumer Electronics Show has gathered over 20,000 new products for a market already crammed with gadgets and novelties of all kinds

Mobiles, tablets, LCDs, LEDs, PCs, earphones, speakers, apps, maps and all things smart were launched, shown off and played with at the show. One of this year's highlights was the 'paper' tablet, the world's first flexible computer, according to the British developers Plastic Logic, which worked with partners Intel and Queen's University Human Media Lab in Canada to develop the PaperTab.

The director of the lab, Roel Vertegaal, explained, "What we have is the world's first 'paper' computer. It is made out of an electrophoretic screen that's about 10.7 inches big, which is made by Plastic Logic. And at the Human Media Lab we took the screen and integrated it with bend sensors, with tracking sensors that know where the screen is located, in order to make essentially a 'paper' computer that mimics what you already do with paper on your desk, except now it's electronic."

It's easy to make a bigger screen by putting two 'paper' tabs together. Because the displays are thin, it's very easy for users to draw or drag graphics across multiple tabs as you would with paper. Hi-tech giant Samsung unveiled a prototype flexible smartphone, which could change the way we interact with technology.



This year's CES high-tech exhibits boast great popularity among visitors

Imagine if you could bend your smartphone or unfold it to the size of a tablet.

Brian Berkeley, the Senior Vice President of Samsung San Jose Display Lab, said, "Our team was able to make a high-resolution display on extremely thin plastic instead of glass. So it won't break even if it's dropped and we can actually bend the screen."

And if you've ever wanted

your very own drone, then start saving for this one which was launched at the CES. It has a high-definition camera installed and can be controlled by a smartphone.

Julien Galou, the Product Manager at Parrot, said, "The AR Drone 2.0 is a helicopter that you control with your smart phone or tablet, so iOS or Android. And basically, what you do is it's sending

a wifi signal, you download the free application and you simply control it by tilting your tablet and one direction or the other." Once the drone has returned, you can upload the videos to the web directly from the drone. It has a range of around 50 metres depending on the wifi available. And while you're busy with your drone, a Flower Power stick could be keeping an eye on

your plants and updating you on how well they're doing. Or how badly, of course.

The app for iPad or tablet has a database of over 600 plants. And if you're not sure what your plant is, you can search according to its colour and flowers. The Flower Stick will then update you with information about the health of your plant, and the environment it lives in.



Glue mending broken bones

Swedish scientists have developed a glue that can act as a plaster for complicated bone fractures, which could dramatically improve patient recovery time

Researchers at Stockholm's Royal Institute of Technology believe it will eliminate the need for metal pins and screws, resulting in faster, safer and less complex surgery.

The research team say many elderly patients struggle with general anaesthesia, sci-

entists are convinced the glue will eradicate the problem. After the fractured bone has healed the glue will degrade and be absorbed by the body, leaving no traces behind of the operation.

But, there are still questions of safety to address and scientists are looking at toxicology reports to ensure the substance is not harmful. If the glue passes the test researchers will begin animal trials confident operations using the glue could begin some time this year.

European car sales slump to 17-year low

Sales of new cars in recession-hit Europe fell to their lowest in 17 years last year

That leaves the region's mass market manufacturers with little room for manoeuvre as they try to cut costly excess production capacity. At the same time profits are under threat from the aggressive discounting needed to get potential buyers into showrooms.

A 16.3 percent drop in December pulled 2012's year-on-year sales down by 8.2 percent — a fifth year of contraction. Industry watchers predict further falls this year and some say changing driving patterns and reduced car use will keep demand weak for years to come.

In contrast to the mass market manufacturers, luxury carmakers had a much better 2012. The likes of Bentley, Rolls-Royce, Mercedes, BMW,



Cars for sale on display in the Hyundai showroom

Jaguar and Porsche reported higher sales, and expect that trend to continue this year particularly in the United States.

At a revitalised Detroit Motor Show industry watcher Matthew Stover with Guggenheim Capital Markets said, "Psychologists say your house is who you are and your car is who you want the world

to think you are. And I think that when you buy a luxury car you're making a statement about yourself." Luxury brands have not suffered the same tough times as their more common car making cousins, and so have been able to reinvest. They are also speeding ahead in what is now the world's biggest car market — China.

IMF warns world powers to keep up reform

The International Monetary Fund (IMF) says the world economy was pulled back from the brink of collapse in 2012, but rigorous fiscal reform will be needed in the coming year to safeguard the recovery

IMF Chief Christine Lagarde said the economic powers have a lot of work left to do and homed in on Europe's challenges. "We stopped the collapse, we should avoid the relapse. It is not time to relax," Lagarde said.

"A lot has been achieved in terms of new tools in the toolbox that the Europeans have available to fight the crisis. Yet, the firewalls have not yet proven operational. Progress needs to be made on banking union," she added. On the United States, Lagarde said the debt ceiling must be raised and was critical of political battles over the budget.

Airbus wings clipped as yearly figures lag behind rivals

Airbus has had its wings clipped. For the first time in a decade the French-based company has lost its crown as the world's largest maker of passenger jets to rivals Boeing.

Sales of its flagship super-jumbo A380, the biggest airliner in the world were around one third of the company's target figure after a problem with the wings of the aircraft. But Airbus is confident of the future as airlines look to replace their fleets with more fuel-efficient planes.

"In 2012 we had a very good year, which was better than expected. We remain the market leader, both in terms of the backlog of orders — with orders for close to 4,700 aircraft on our books — that's seven years of production — and that year after year, we continued to increase our deliveries, our speed of delivery, to our customers," said Fabrice Bregier, CEO of Airbus. Despite his buoyant tone, sales figures were lower than the company's record year in 2011. Net orders — that is after cancellations — totalled 833, a drop of 41 percent.