MIP @ CES

By Ethan Tussey

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In January, MIP traveled to the [Consumer Electronics Show](#) (CES) in Las Vegas. We roamed the exhibition halls, tested out funky gadgets, and attended keynote speeches. We left Sin City high on the promises of new technology, but struggled to reconcile our excitement with a sobering reality: much of the technological potential at CES was tempered by our frustrations with functionality and interoperability. Here's our take on the good, the bad, and the confusing.

Personal TV. Almost. Major consumer electronics companies are the stars of CES and their elaborate displays on the exhibition floor offer conference attendees a chance to play with the latest technology. Personalizing the home entertainment experience—with 3D displays, voice recognition, and gesture controls—was a common theme across the different stalls. Such technologies are designed to isolate the viewer from his or her surroundings as they try to generate a more direct "connection" to the screen.

As we quickly discovered, however, the technology requires

further refinement. In particular, we struggled to get the prototype for the [Samsung](#) voice recognition software to operate as advertised. After repeating several times the voice activation cue ("Hi TV!"), we found ourselves shouting at the screen—making us wish we could just use the remote.

Problems aside, the path is clear: consumer electronics products soon will [identify](#) their owners, predict their desires, and respond to physical actions or vocal commands while delivering entertainment content.

Flexible Technology. Inflexible Options. We also found there was a lot of excitement for over-the-top technology. Two products in particular, [Simple.TV](#) and [Roku's Streaming Stick](#), allow consumers to their end cable subscriptions ("cord cut") by making Internet-based media services more convenient. These technologies address two of the most significant obstacles to cord cutting. Streamlined designs clear up technological clutter and facilitate mobility across different televisions in the same household; they also both provide access to live content.

All companies we visited advertised their own on-demand content marketplaces that they had integrated into their connected televisions, like the Samsung Smart Hub (left). Yet, when content or apps are purchased from these digital marketplaces, they are accessible only on devices within a single family of products (i.e. a movie purchased on a Samsung television is accessible only on other Samsung devices). Such limited interoperability across devices and platforms forces consumers into a "[silo](#)." It's a problem that cloud storage services like the [beleaguered](#) Ultraviolet are trying to fix, but the

road to a more connected home entertainment experience has yet to settle on a shared vision, never mind a common platform. Thus, consumers are presented with a bewildering number of options; nothing at CES indicated that a solution to this confusion would be ready any time soon.

For other takes on the conference, check out these resources:

[CNET](#)

[PC Magazine](#)

[The New York Times](#)

[Wired](#)