

cebit in focus

CeBit is one of the biggest IT expos in the world. Andrew Charlesworth and Spencer Dalziel visited this year's event and here outline the main themes of the show



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broadband marketing director,
Motorola

If there was one outstanding theme to CeBit this year, it was wireless networks. As big companies have frozen or cut their IT budgets, the emphasis was on wireless products and digital convergence for the consumer.

Samsung, for example, was preaching a gospel of convergent digital fun on the hoof with its Duocam digital camera and camcorder combo, X10 ultra-thin notebook based on Intel's wireless Centrino technology, M330 PDA with built-in camcorder and P400 smartphone with rotating digital camera.

On the go

So is Samsung's mobile digital convergence a grand vision or just a collection of shiny toys? “It takes time for digital convergence to happen,” says Jang Jae Lee, vice president of Samsung's digital printing division. “We are making the products one by one.”

Motorola wants us to have fun with technology too, as evidenced by a big noisy stand themed around its annoying pan-European ‘Hello Moto!’ promo campaign, complete with live rap band and MTV-style presenters, all projected on to a video wall the size of Kent.

“Even with the advent of broadband, internet access in the home is still very PC-centric,” said Jean-Claude Baumer, broadband marketing director at Motorola.

“You can download MP3s, but they are on your hard disk. How do you get

them to the place where they can be appreciated – your hi-fi?”

The answer is Motorola's SPG1000, which acts as a digital hub but looks like a late-1970s music centre. It's a broadband cable modem gateway and firewall bristling with ethernet, USB and Wi-Fi connections in a set-top box that would take up most of your dining room table. The SPG1000 is big, but then it has a massive gulf to span: between the PC and traditional consumer electronics.

Throwing light on things

Exhibitors at CeBit were also showing the first commercial fruits of research into organic electroluminescence, also known as Oled (organic light emitting diode) screen technology.

Unlike LCDs, Oleds emit light so they are brighter, have better contrast and a wider viewing angle. Oleds don't require a backlight and this has two advantages: they consume less power and super-thin screens can be developed, which makes them the perfect choice for a wide range of mobile products. Furthermore, the fast response time of Oleds make it possible to view motion pictures without blurring.

The down side to Oled technology is that certain colours based on blue Oled elements have a limited lifespan. But the manufacturers displaying products at CeBit reckon they have this problem licked.

Toshiba displayed a prototype mobile phone with a clear Oled screen and Sanyo demonstrated a prototype 15in TV. Co-developed with Sanyo, Kodak's prototype 15in flat-panel looked great but it was the company's retail-ready LS633 digital camera that took everyone's breath away.

The LS633's 2.2in Oled display offers a 165-degree viewing angle, can be used in bright outdoor light and will retail at £247 ex VAT. Look out for a review in a future issue of *PC Advisor*.

With Taiwanese company Chi Mei Optoelectronics demonstrating a monstrous 20in Oled flat-panel this May, it looks like the beginning of the end for LCDs.

• For CeBit product highlights see Top gear on page 26. ■