New Gadgets for the Digital Lifestyle

The consumer tech industry celebrated its mid-summer product launches at CE Week. Our reporter checked out all the new gadgets so you don't have to.

By Michael A. Kashmer / *Digital Broadband Programming Consultant*

Developers showed their latest gear and gadgets at the June 2018 CE Week exhibition at the Javits Center in New York City. Screens, large and small, played a big part in making these products attractive. Those that were simply cute and cool-looking didn't make the cut.

Along with presenting educational opportunities and expert panels, this exhibition focused on the latest trends in consumer tech products. This year continued the recent trend of products that provide security and safety, primarily for children. Quite a few exhibits offered tech toys for adults as well.

MONBABY: BORN DIGITAL

MonBaby (www.monbaby.com) is the only baby monitor with a smart button that works with iPhone and Android devices. The button, attached to a baby's sleepwear, tracks activity and breathing and notifies parents by phone.

This device sends alerts even if the parent is using another app. If the infant rolls over, the parent can return her to her natural sleep position. If the device detects no breathing movement, it sends an alert to the parent's phone immediately. If the baby wakes up after a nap, MonBaby lets you know. Is the baby fighting a head cold and experiencing restless sleep? MonBaby lets you know that, too. Retail price is about $100.

AURA: PHOTO SHARING FOR TECHNOPHOBES

AURA (www.auraframes.com) offers a quick and easy way to share and view photos. From phone to frame – instantly, anywhere. Everyone has old photos tucked away in the bedroom closet or basement, gathering dust. AURA's photo curation software lets people share photos with family members all over the world.

In my family, a number of elderly relatives have an aversion to technology in general and to photo sharing in particular. It's hard to see them left out of lives of their great-grandchildren just because the process is daunting. To make photo sharing easier for far-off, elderly relatives, AURA lets users send new digital photos and older (clear off the dust) scanned pictures that can become the cornerstones of family history and bring big smiles to everyone watching, no matter what age. The AURA frame design features a brilliant, ultra-high-density display. The viewer can change the displayed photo by just waving a hand in front of the frame.

A tech-savvy relative can curate (load) photos from a phone into the frame in the technophobe's home, erasing the fear and anxiety. AURA makes looking at pictures fun again.

B'ZT: WEARABLE SECURITY

B'zT (info.smartbzt.com) makes a washable T-shirt that comes in kid-friendly designs with cool sewn-on patches. The T-shirt also has a very functional feature parents will love. If you were a T-shirt designer and wanted to find the most physically secure location for a safety monitor on a shirt, you might consider a sewn-on patch. Some designs have more prominent graphics than others, but there are plenty of colors, designs and patches to choose from. No child will be disappointed. And the tracking works the same no matter which patch the child picks.

The cloth patches can be bought separately to give each child a chance to customize his or her T's with a favorite theme. An important feature is that they are washable. Did one of your children ever want to wear the same article of clothing every day to school? What is a parent to do? The monitor that connects to the parent's phone is sewn into the shirt and does not have to be removed before washing. It's easy for Mom or Dad, and the child is happy and gets to school on time.

If a child outgrows the shirt and passes it down to a sibling, just change the registration of the child wearing the shirt. Follow the simple online directions, touch the phone to the patch, and it will scan the new child's information.

If keeping track of kids in a public park or on a playground or a beach is important, B'zT may be of interest. There is also a School Payback system that earns a 10 percent payback on school-sponsored purchases. (Sign-up information is on the website.) ❖

Mike Kashmer has worked in cable TV for more than 30 years in distribution, finance and programming. His experience includes network startups and foreign-language programming. Reach Mike at mikekashmer@aol.com.

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