

THE LITTLE BLUE BOOK FROM

CES

CONSUMER ELECTRONICS SHOW 2013

R. ROBBINS & L. SUTER

FORWARD

The annual [International Consumer Electronics Show](#) in Las Vegas is one of the largest trade events on the planet.

It is a weird and wonderful [festival of gadgets](#), that also provides an early glimpse at shifts in the consumer technology marketplace. For broadcasters, it can reveal exciting opportunities but also possible threats.

In the Blue Room we use the show as a key indicator emerging trends. We have rated each trend with a five star system to indicate potential and immediacy of any impact.

Check out our top five and drop by the Blue Room to find out more from the team.

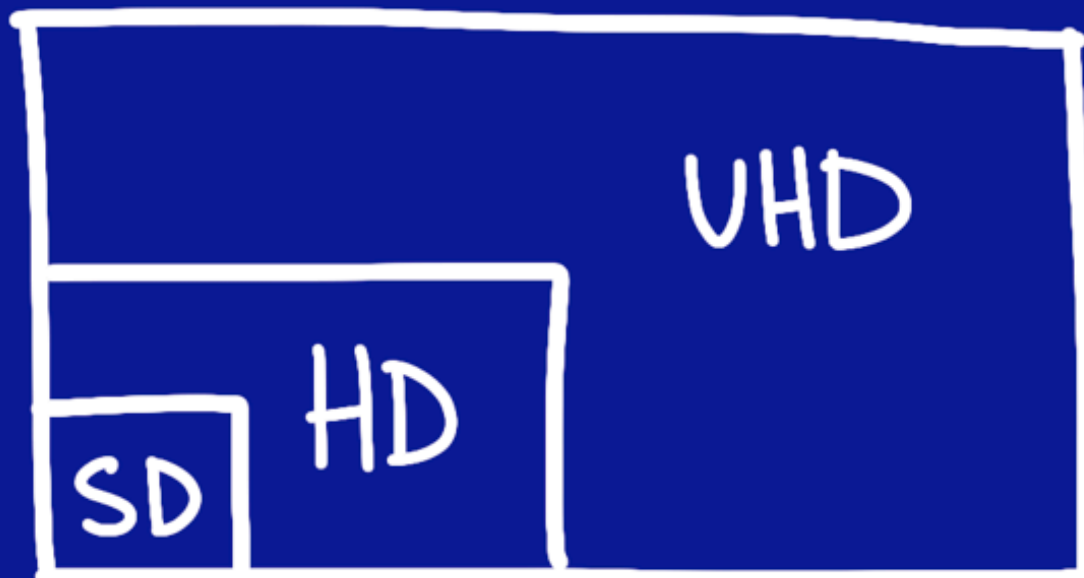
LOWER
IMPACT



HIGHER
IMPACT



ULTRA HD



4K UHD TV was the most widely promoted theme at this year's show. All of the vendors that you have and haven't heard of unveiled very big and even bigger 4K panels. It wasn't hard to find the "world's largest 4K screen" - several booths boasted huge 110" UHD displays.

We were interested in finding more modest and hopefully more practical sizes. HiSense showed a 50" TV while Sharp had touch monitors at 32". Panasonic suggested their 20" 4K tablet would make a great tool for artists and designers.

Sony announced the "world's first 4K video distribution service" that will hit the US market, later this year. While Netflix and Samsung are partnering to test UHD on-demand content, but without an industry ready distribution platform most vendors were keen to boast upscaling abilities.

After years of anticipation it's clear that the manufacturers are yet to crack cost effective OLED panel production. However, Sony and Panasonic both showed off stunning 56" 4K OLED prototypes.

Little mention was made of 3D. With only LG being the only company keenly reminding us that their TVs pack 3D cinema glasses.



SMART TV GETS SERIOUS

Voice and gesture have made significant advancements on 2012s **smart TV's**. We user-tested LG's finger **gesture control**, which appeared to be responsive, intuitive and rather accurate.

LG and Samsung will release developments in **voice control** and **recommendations** with the aim of your TV understanding proper sentences rather than you barking keywords at the TV. Instead you'd say: "show me romantic comedies with Tom Cruise" (but we don't know why you'd ever want to say this).

Other developments included a capacitive '3D' proximity trackpad on a TV remote control. This gives the user a visual pointer on the TV prior to their finger coming into contact with the trackpad. Allowing more accurate control of the on-screen interface and focus on the bigscreen rather than looking down at the remote.

We also noticed the expansion in the number of remotes featuring branded one-click direct-to-service buttons. Netflix appear to be the most prolific in this battle for remote control real-estate. We feel this trend reinforces the BBC's strategy to introduce the Connected Red Button as a gateway to BBC services for connected TV.

Eye-tracking and mind control TV popped up again at on the Haier booth, unfortunately without any major improvements in reliability or accuracy. However, we hope to see exciting developments in this field at CES 2014 and beyond.

$$S(TV) = G + V + R^2$$



A NEW TV SHOP FRONT

WILL THIS MEAN
MORE PRODUCT
PLACEMENT?



LINDSEY SUTER

Samsung have made leaps forward in [TV interface design](#). 2013 includes the introduction of a [carousel of pages](#) each dedicated to TV, video, locally stored content, social or apps. Borrowing 'metro style' design cues, the new interface is slick, fast and looks good. And it needs to - Samsung plan for the hub to be the default view when you turn on the TV.

The new hub will also feature [S-Recommendation](#). This monitors viewing behaviour and ratings to suggest programmes of interest.

Increasingly electronics manufacturers are becoming key gatekeepers while trying to gain the same brand association in the TV environment, as Sky or the BBC.

In-programme TV commerce is something we've heard about before but we've not yet seen it breakthrough. However, strategic partnerships between TV vendors and shopping channels may see that change.

[Panasonic and the Home Shopping Network](#) are coming together to provide live TV purchasing, and Samsung showed us their T-Commerce platform. Just one click on the remote bagged Jessica Szohr's latest outfit while watching an episode of Gossip Girl.



STICK OR UPGRADE



By our count 2013 brings the sixth iteration of Samsung connected TV. Each year the performance is improved and the software updated. However, the Evolution Kit that turns last years dusty old smart set into a shiny new smart TV is here. Samsung is promising a three-year commitment to customers, so that a 2012 smart TV will be able to use 2015 features.

Another way to get a different connected TV service is with a smart stick. These HDMI Wi-Fi dongles plug-in to the back of the TV and will appear on an input much like a traditional set-top-box. We saw a number of these devices at the show. Roku are leading in this market and has been quick to partner with the Chinese vendors HiSense, TCL and Haier.

With narrowing hardware profit margins and the CE vendors shifting focus to content and services monetisation a reliance on shortening television replenishment cycles is coming to an end.



NEW FORMS OF CONTENT

CES provided several interesting demos and products suggesting a potential for new and emerging forms of digital content.

We saw new 360 degree cameras and lens including the third-party modification from [Eye Mirror for GoPro](#) and the “world’s first 360 action camera” the [Geonaute](#).

The [Condition One iPad app](#) has been updated for immersive high resolution 2.7K or live streaming panoramic video.

We were also impressed by Qualcomm’s [AllJoyn peer-to-peer Sesame Street demo](#). This multi-screen app shows how characters, content and primary focus of attention can seamlessly move between the TV and tablet.

[TCL’s Smart Pen](#) brings together storytelling from a physical book together with animation on the television.

[parWinr’s](#) idea of turning any piece of video into a game caught our attention. We bumped in them in the Eureka Park start-up zone and have been promised access when the beta is available.

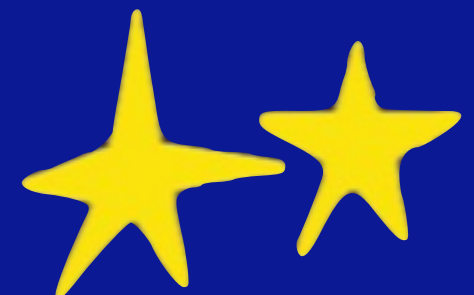
[Oculus Rift](#) has been a recent [Kickstarter](#) success with their interesting gaming headgear. While we missed their demo in a hotel suite in the Venetian the reports are of a fully immersive and mind-blowing experience. Developer kits are due to ship in March - we can’t wait to get this in to the Blue Room.

For us one of the most exciting devices of the show was the [Golden-i headset](#). Their implementation of voice control is one of the best we’ve tried. It also features GPS, Bluetooth, HD camera, noise calculation, microdisplay, and gesture control.

With much speculation around [Google’s Project Glass](#) the Head Mounted Display category is expected to expand in the coming years.



TWO STARS FOR NOW
BUT WILL IMPACT LONG TERM!



RICHARD ROBBINS

THANKS FOR JOINING US !
@BBCBLUEROOM

DRAWINGS BY ALISON HUNTER