

Gadgets and gizmos at Hanover fair

HANOVER, GERMANY: From a glove that can be used as a mobile phone to a remote-controlled spy helicopter, this year's CeBIT, the world's top high-technology product fair, showcases a bewildering array of gadgets.



For geeks in cold climates, China-based firm Winnershine Technology demonstrated the mobile phone glove that keeps hands warm, connects to a smartphone via bluetooth, has an earpiece in the thumb and a speaker in the little finger. It allows users to make calls without getting cold hands. The gloves sell for US\$12.50.

Equally nerdy is the smartphone-controlled golf ball developed by Woddon Industrial Limited.

No need for golf clubs: simply download the app to your smartphone, then wave your device as if swinging a club. The ball judges the speed and angle of the "swing" and moves accordingly.

Woddon also showcases their latest line in remote-controlled spy devices.

Budding James Bonds can choose between flying saucers, helicopters or airships and pilot them using a smartphone, taking pictures or real-time video of their unsuspecting target. The "*iConCopter*", due out in a couple of months, has a maximum range of 50 metres and is likely to retail at around US\$390, said sales manager Harry Chen.

But not all gadgets at the CeBIT are so frivolous.

Taiwan-based PenPower Technology is wowing crowds with its text-reading and translating scanning pen. Sleek-black and scarcely bigger than a normal ballpoint pen, the device scans text from a sheet of paper and transmits it instantly to a smartphone before offering to translate it into any one of more than 20 languages.

Launched last month, the futuristic pen recognises a host of Asian languages, including Japanese, Chinese and Korean, and costs around €130, said manager Shin Kuo.

Another world first is claimed by video card manufacturer Spreengs. Everyone likes to add a personal touch to a birthday card but the New York-based firm has gone a step further by allowing users to upload videos or a photo slideshow to the inside of an ordinary greeting card via a USB port.

The cards are available for between €25 and €45 depending on the size of the screen.

Also pulling in the crowds on CeBIT's first day was the Cookoo watch unveiled by Bluetrek Technologies from Hong Kong. It looks -- and functions like a normal watch but is linked to a smartphone in your pocket and notifies you when you have received an email or when one of your Facebook friends has updated his or her status.

The Cookoo can also take pictures, which are transferred to your smartphone, and allow you to skip songs playing on your MP3 player without the hassle of taking it out of your pocket. Launched in January, the watch retails at €129, said sales manager Willy Vong.

One of more unusual computer accessories on show is a mouse in the shape of the iconic yellow three-wheeled van from cult British TV comedy classic *Only Fools and Horses*.

But for the ultimate in pointless but fun gadgets that no self-respecting nerd should be without, UK-based Satzuma is hard to beat. Large crowds gathered around its stand at the opening of the show to coo over a tap-shaped shower radio or alarm clock shaped like a directors' clapper board that sleepy users have to snap down to stop the wake-up call.

Satzuma also unveiled a personal drink-chiller. The can-sized red fridge plugs neatly into a laptop or desktop computer and keeps a beverage cold all day, enthused sales executive Michaela Grill. "Cold beer all day and you need never get up from your desk," she said.

Source: *AFP* via I-Net Bridge

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