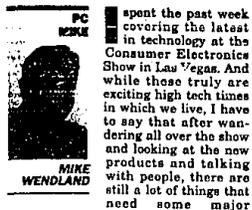


High tech: helpful, yes, but annoying, too



PC spent the past week covering the latest in technology at the Consumer Electronics Show in Las Vegas. And while those guys are exciting high tech times in which we live, I have to say that after wandering all over the show and looking at the new products and talking with people, there are still a lot of things that need some major improvements.

Here are some of the things that bug me the most and judging by my CES conversations and the e-mail I receive from consumers, also bugs the computer using public:

MULTIMEDIA MADNESS
Sure we have streaming video. But there are too many formats from too

many companies requiring too many plug-ins to Internet web browsers. Worse yet, after waiting 10 minutes to download something, we then have to squint to view in a one inch square window.

OVER-CONNECTIVITY
I admit to being a bit of a geek. I carry a pager, a digital phone, and a Palm Pilot. But at CES, we saw companies urging us to browse the web on our wireless phones, listen to our e-mail in Internet-connected cars and even have our refrigerators and microwaves at home equipped with Internet devices so we could surf while we cook. I just don't think we need to be that connected. There should be some places where we're unplugged.

CD-ROM CASES
They break too easily. And can't they figure out a way to wrap them in cellophane in such a way that you can then unwrap them without having to use a

pair of scissors?
CUMBERSOME BOOT-UPS
I timed my Dell laptop the other day. It took nearly three minutes from the second I pushed the "on" button until the computer was ready to use. Bill Gates is right when he says instant-on convenience should be a prime goal for PC makers.

SHUT-DOWN PROCEDURES
Think about it: Does it make sense that when you want to turn off your Windows computer, you have to first go to the "Start" button on the lower left bottom of the screen? We need a simple "off" switch or button that does it all for us.

PC/MAC WARS
Let's give it up already. Macs are great, so are PCs. But the fact that they are still basically incompatible is silly. On a short term basis, there needs to be better translation and emulation soft-

ware developed for PCs. Apple and some of its third party developers, are better at this than PC makers. What's really needed is an operating system that goes both ways.

DONGLES
You know what a dongle is, right? It's that little doodad that plugs into laptop PC card modem or network adapter. And they always break. Always. There are a few cards that now have connectors built right in but most still use dongles. It's no conviction, the only reason they use dongles is to make more money selling us replacement dongles.

WEB SITE REARRANGINGS
I propose that we all start boycotting Web sites that make us complete long, personal registration forms before they allow us to use their features. And if we do register and that Web site then sells our name to Internet spammers I propose that that greedy Web site then be forced to pay all of our Internet access

fees for life.
TRASH E-MAIL
Everyone at the CES show was complaining about the latest e-mail wrangling they've been receiving, the e-mail that supposedly recounts how many members of Congress have had legal difficulties, domestic violence problems and the like. The e-mail is totally unreliable. There's no source for the statistics given and no reason to believe it is true. Yet I personally have received over 60 of these e-mails each week, blindly sent by glib people who immediately think it is true because they got the info from the Internet. Enough already!

Mike Wendland covers computers and technology for NBC Television stations across the country. He also hosts a weekend call-in radio show called "PC Talk" on WXYT, Talkradio 1270. He can be reached through his Web site at www.pcmike.com

Datebook from page D4

Staying Stopped, a flexible, supportive five-session program addresses the essential elements for permanent smoking cessation. Group meets Thursdays, Jan. 13 through Feb. 10 from 6-8 p.m. Cost is \$75. Special offer to the first 10 registrants of \$50. Call (888) DMC-2500 to register at Huron Valley-Sinai Hospital.

SAT, JAN. 15
NO BROTHER/SISTER
"Big Brother/Big Sister Program" helps prepare children for a new baby in the family. The fee is \$15 per family. Children will be encouraged, in a casual group setting, to discuss feelings about the changes in mom and their expectations about the new baby's arrival. Beaumont nurse educators will use dolls to demonstrate basic infant care including holding, feeding, burping, diapering and baby safety. A film will discuss the role of a big brother or big sister, typical feelings and how babies look and

act. Class is held from 9-10:30 a.m. or 11 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. at William Beaumont Hospital Administration Building, Classroom #3 (3601 W. Thirteenth Mile Road) in Royal Oak. Call (800) 633-7377.

WED, JAN. 19
DYSLEXIA SUPPORT
The January Dyslexia Support Group will meet to discuss ADD/ADHD information and treatment/behavior management. Dr. Arthur Robin, professor of Psychiatry/Behavioral Neuroscience and Pediatrics - Wayne State University School of Medicine. Meet at the Michigan Dyslexia Institute - Detroit Metro Center, 30230 Orchard Lake Road, Suite #130, Farmington Hills. Meeting begins at 7 p.m. There will be no February meeting.

THUR, JAN. 20

BREATHERS CLUB
Support and education group for adults with chronic lung diseases. Meets at 1 p.m. William Beaumont Hospital, Administration Building, lower level - Classroom 2, 3601 W. Thirteenth Mile Road, Royal Oak. Call (248) 561-6027.

INTERSTITIAL CYSTITIS
Support group for adults who have been diagnosed with the chronic bladder disorder interstitial cystitis. Spouses and support people invited. Meets from 7-9 p.m. William Beaumont Hospital, 10th Floor, classrooms A, B, C; 3601 W. Thirteenth Mile Road, Royal Oak. Call (313) 421-8378.

PRE-MARRIAGE COUNSELING
Couples applying for a marriage license must show proof that they have received counseling regarding the transmission and prevention of sexually transmitted disease and AIDS. \$25/couple, \$15/single. From 7-8 p.m. at the Providence Medical Center - Novi. To register call (877) 345-5500.

TUE, JAN. 25
TODDLER DISCIPLINE
"Discipline during the toddler years," an evening class for parents and caregivers of children ages 1-2. Meets from 7-9 p.m. at William Beaumont Hospital, Administration Building (classrooms 12) 3601 W. 13 Mile Road, Royal Oak. Fee is \$8 per family. Call (800) 633-7377 to register.

SAT, JAN. 22
WEIGHT CONTROL
Novi Park: Providence Medical Center, 47601 Grand River (Beck Road entrance) will host the weight control program from 1-3 p.m. To register call (877) 345-5500.

SMOKING CESSATION
A stop smoking program will be held at Providence Medical Center - Providence Park at 47601 Grand River (Beck Road entrance) from 10 a.m. to noon. Call (877) 345-5500 to register.

world beyond glasses and contacts? Ophthalmologist Robert T. Clark, M.D. will provide information at Huron Valley-Sinai Hospital about the most advanced refractive surgery technique: The LASIK Laser Vision Correction procedure corrects nearsightedness, farsightedness and astigmatism. The procedure involves very little or no discomfort and eliminates dependence on glasses or contacts. Bring your glasses or prescription with you. Call (888) DMC-2500 to register.

HEARTBURN
Heartburn: Put out the fire. "Treatments for Chronic Heartburn," will be offered from 7-8:30 p.m. This program provides an overview of gastroesophageal reflux, otherwise known as heartburn, including diagnosis and medical and surgical treatment. Presented by R.B. Kolachalam, M.D. To register call (877) 345-5500.

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Priced Membership or package</p> <p>Barbelle Spa Tanning Salon - Berkeley</p> <p>3 month deal \$500, month deal \$100</p> <p>Baldie Health Store - Walled Lake</p> <p>10% Off On All Supplements</p> <p>Chastar Drugs 180 S. Wayne Road - Westland</p> <p>All Products \$1.00 Off</p> <p>Dr. Dental V. Tornello - Royal Oak</p> <p>Free Initial Consultation & Exam</p> <p>Dr. Lefkowitz - Ferndale</p> <p>Free Initial Consultation - Farmington Hills</p> <p>Dieter Hair Fashion - Canton</p> <p>10% Off Reg. Prices Cuts & Hair Products</p> <p>Ferris Hair - Birmingham</p> <p>\$5 Off Any Hair Service</p> <p>Family Dental Center 734-427-8300 - Canton</p> <p>10% Off First Visit & Free Consultation</p> <p>Great Hair - Berkeley</p> <p>10% Off Any Service</p> <p>House of Optics - Royal Oak</p> <p>15% Off Complete Eye Examinations</p> <p>Medical Center Pediatrics DMC - W. Bloom/Ring Farm</p> <p>Special Offer for New Patients. Call for Details</p> <p>Melrose Barber & Stylist - Berkeley</p> <p>\$1 Off Haircuts + \$5 Off Highlights & Colors</p> <p>Partners Barber 878-2849 - Farmington Hills</p> <p>10% Off Barber Services, 10% Off Massage, Haircut</p> <p>Pugh Salon - Canton</p> <p>20% Off All Services</p> <p>Sheer Reflections Sheridan Squares - Southfield</p> <p>10% Off Hair Salon</p> <p>Six Devils Hair Services - Westland</p> <p>20% Off Hair & Tanning Products</p> <p>Spazzy's Womens Day - Canton</p> <p>15% Off Any Membership</p> <p>The Goddess of Hair - Royal Oak</p> <p>10% Off All Services</p> <p>Veneta Electrolysis - Ferndale</p> <p>10% Off Second Treatment</p>	<p>C Coffee, Bagels & Bakeries</p> <p>Donut Delicacies Cafe - Westland</p> <p>10% Off Donut Order Cakes</p> <p>New York Bagel - Ferndale</p> <p>\$1 Off Any Food Purchase of \$5 or More</p>	<p>D Dry Cleaners & Laundry</p> <p>Huntington Cleaners - Huntington Woods</p> <p>10% Off Inquiring Orders for New Customers</p>	<p>E Entertainment</p> <p>Amberwood Roller Rink - Canton</p> <p>Buy One Admission - Get One Free (Sat. Only)</p> <p>Detroit Zoological Society - Royal Oak</p> <p>10% Off All Membership Packages</p> <p>Electric Bill - Westland</p> <p>Pay for Bill on Prepaid Card One Hour Free</p> <p>Hardtail Bikes - Berkeley</p> <p>Free Shoe Repair for Cardholder</p>	<p>F Florists & Gifts</p> <p>Home - Royal Oak</p> <p>15% Off Purchase of \$25 or More (excludes wedding orders)</p> <p>Kerwin Floral Expressions - Ferndale</p> <p>10% Off - Excluding Wire Orders</p> <p>Melrose Flowers - Royal Oak</p> <p>\$5.00 Off Any Purchase Over \$10.00</p> <p>Stare Coverts Flowers - Southfield</p> <p>10% Off All Products in Metro Detroit Area</p> <p>The Green Sea - Royal Oak</p> <p>10% Off Purchase over \$10</p>	<p>G Home Improvement</p> <p>ABC Plumbing - Canton</p> <p>\$20 Off Service or \$25 Off SFR</p> <p>American Blind and Wallpaper Factory - Plymouth</p> <p>10% Off Order \$50 Min. 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A. Alexander & Co. - Livonia</p> <p>10% Discount</p> <p>Sartone Garden Center - Plymouth</p> <p>10% Off All Hard Garden Tools</p>	<p>K Pizza</p> <p>Cottage Inn Pizzeria - Birmingham</p> <p>21 Large Pizzas - One Hour \$12.99</p> <p>Marlas Deli & Pizzeria 734-811-1200 - Canton</p> <p>\$5.00 Off \$50.00 Purchase (excluding tobacco & alcohol)</p> <p>Pizzeria - Ferndale</p> <p>\$1.00 Off Banana Bread with any purchase</p> <p>Pizza One - Ferndale</p> <p>\$2 Small Pizzas for \$6.99 + tax</p> <p>Railton Pizza - Royal Oak</p> <p>\$1.50 Small Cheese Pizza</p>	<p>L Restaurants</p> <p>Alcove Hobby Shop - Royal Oak</p> <p>Free Wine Any Purchase</p> <p>Alexanders Framing - Royal Oak</p> <p>15% Off Any Purchase</p> <p>Alta's Greenfield Market - Southfield</p> <p>\$5 Off Any Meat or Produce Purchase</p> <p>America's Vitamin & Nutrition - Berkeley</p> <p>10% Off Any Purchase Every Day</p> <p>Beads S.R.O. - Royal Oak</p> <p>10% Off Purchase of \$10 or More</p> <p>Border Outlet 2500 Hwy 734-977-6328 - Canton</p> <p>10% Off In-Stock Only</p> <p>Bourlens BBQ & Fireplace - Ferndale</p> <p>10% Off Replacement Parts</p> <p>Chef's Rent-All - Canton</p> <p>10% Off Any Rental</p> <p>Champion's Culinary Warehouse - Southfield</p> <p>10% Discount</p> <p>Chris Furniture Framing/Plymouth Rd - Livonia</p> <p>40% Off All E-Top</p> <p>Citica - Berkeley</p> <p>10% Off On All Glass Antiques & Collectibles</p> <p>Conrad Design Group - Royal Oak</p> <p>10% Off New Carpets/Carpeting/Inroom</p> <p>Crossing Bridges - Canton</p> <p>10% Off Cards, Greeting & More (Books/Sales excluded)</p> <p>Dalley Carpet 5 Mile W of Meridian - Livonia</p> <p>10% Off Reg. 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