Notes from CES 2017—Press Day 2

1) Today, the Fung Global Retail & Technology team attended day two of the press segment of the Consumer Electronics Show in Las Vegas.

2) Today’s presentations fell into two general categories: automotive and technology.

3) In automotive, Toyota demonstrated its AI-centric Concept-I car, Bosch and Hyundai demonstrated connection technology and ZF announced an AI-based controller for autonomous industrial and passenger vehicles.

4) In consumer electronics, there were many new audio and IoT-based products, as well as products for the smart home, many with voice control.

5) Intel introduced a laptop using next-generation semiconductor technology and gave multiple VR demonstrations, with plans to offer its tools free to developers by the end of the year.

6) Nvidia delivered the opening keynote to CES proper, discussing how its leading-edge graphics technology was the catalyst for artificial intelligence (AI), and demonstrating new games, video hardware, a cloud video-gaming service and an AI-based vehicle controller. It also announced a partnership with Audi for self-driving cars.

7) The Fung Global Retail & Technology team will report on announcements and discoveries at CES 2017 throughout the week.
CES 2017—Press Day 2

Today was the second of two press days at CES 2017, and featured company press conferences and the first keynote address. Summaries of those events follow.

Technology Presentations

Intel—VR-Centric Presentation

Intel kicked off its presentation by demonstrating a laptop that was running on its new processor that features leading-edge 10nm line widths. The remainder of the session was dedicated to virtual reality (VR); attendees were outfitted with an Oculus VR headset and shown a travel landscape, a live video of a drone inspecting an array of solar panels and a new zombie computer game in VR. Intel also provided a demo of mixed reality, in which two players wearing headsets outfitted with Intel RealSense cameras were able to move around in a VR computer game, where the software turned objects in the room into VR objects. Intel’s VR technology is called Alloy, which it will make publicly available in 4Q17. The company also showed a live 360-degree view of a live basketball game.

LG—Focuses on the Smart Home

LG kicked off the second day of CES with a discussion about AI, robots, TVs, smart homes and its partnership with Amazon. The company discussed its DeepThinQ artificial intelligence platform and its integration into its smart home products. LG unveiled its Hub Robot, similar to an Amazon Echo, receiving voice commands and connecting with other smart-home items. Some of those smart-home items include the new LG InstaView Door-in-Door refrigerator, which has Amazon’s Alexa digital assistant built in.

The company also unveiled its “picture-in-wall” TV called the LG Signature OLED TV W, which is nearly as thin as wallpaper (2.57 mm thick). LG says it creates a sense of immersion, as if it is one with the wall. The television attaches to the wall via a magnetic bracket.

Source: Fung Global Retail & Technology
Monster—Unveils New Wireless Earphones

Noel Lee, CEO of Monster, unveiled two pairs of wireless earphones powered by its all-new AirLink technology. The company will implement this new technology in two new models: one model updates the company’s iSport line, while the other will enhance its Elements line. According to Noel, AirLink uses a y-shaped antenna that keeps the wireless connection flawless, which can be a problem for other true wireless earbuds.

Hisense—Technology Powerhouse and the #1 TV Maker in China

Hisense is the #1 LCD TV brand in China and South Africa, with more than 23-million TV users globally. The company highlighted its LaserCast TVs, which use laser-projection technology, and its QLED quantum dot LED TV line. These TVs feature Hisense’s ULED local-dimming technology. The company plans to launch a new line of quantum dot products in 2019. In addition to TVs, Hisense is a broad-based technology company, manufacturing optical transceivers for telecommunications, POS systems, computer-assisted surgical devices and transportation systems, air conditioners and refrigerators. The company highlighted its 4K TVs, its TVs running the Roku OS, and said its TVs are close to receiving THX certification.

Nvidia—Launches Cloud Gaming Service and Discusses AI Capabilities in Smart Cars

Founder and CEO Jen-Hsun Huang discussed Nvidia’s initiatives behind machine learning, cloud-computing operations and autonomous driving. The company announced its partnership with ZF to offer Xavier, an auto-focused supercomputer designed to serve as the brains behind self-driving cars. Nvidia also announced a partnership with Audi to build the next-generation smart car powered by Nvidia AI technology. The company also
introduced a new $199 version of its Shield video-streaming box. The device comes capable of playing videos in high-definition, 4K resolution.

Panasonic—Introduces GH5 Camera

Panasonic unveiled its much-anticipated Lumix GH5 camera. The camera features an all-new 20-megapixel Micro 4/3 sensor and 5-axis in-body image stabilization. The Panasonic GH5 is slated to appear sometime in March for $1,999. The company talked about its battery manufacturing line in Tesla’s Gigafactory, and technology for data storage, which it developed with Facebook and is now being used by the US Department of Homeland Security.

Samsung—Adding IoT to its Broad Line of Products

Samsung discussed new technology, particularly Internet of Things (IoT), among its various product categories. In TVs, the company talked about the leading technology used in its 4K UHD and quantum dot TVs. Its LED TVs have been redesigned to be more aesthetically appealing along with a set of matching furniture. The TV is now the hub for viewing broadcast, cable, streaming and gaming. This year, Samsung has improved its smartphone app and added voice control, as well as introduced high-performance audio accessories. In appliances, Samsung is introducing new washers and driers with two compartments each—for small and large loads—in addition to a new desktop oven, a family hub refrigerator (also with a voice interface) and new Chromebooks that can run Android apps and a dedicated gaming laptop.
VOXX—Many New Consumer Products

VOXX International is a leading global manufacturer and supplier of consumer electronic products in the automotive, premium audio and accessory industries, with a portfolio of over 30 well-known consumer brands. The company highlighted three categories of products. The first segment represents mainstream consumer brands, such as 808 speakers and Earcanz headphones, in addition to Project Nursery baby monitors and SoundSoother baby soothers. One interesting product was a TERK combination Wi-Fi router and HDTV antenna. Its high-end Klipsch brand is focusing on luxurious finishes and also features the acquired Danish design brand JAMO. The company’s advanced solutions business announced a headphone with built-in oximeter, a smartphone charging case and a line of body cameras for law enforcement and other applications.

Automotive Presentations

Bosch—Connecting Home, Auto and the Smartphone

Bosch is a 130-year-old company and one of the world’s largest parts suppliers to global automotive companies. In its presentation, Bosch outlined its vision for the connected future, connecting humans, devices and vehicles. The presentation began with a discussion of its 130-year history of technological innovation and recent efforts, such as the Bosch Startup Network, which worked with Mayfield Robotics, the designer of the Kuri robot. One major effort is making the car the new personal assistant—Bosch is demonstrating an intelligent car at its booth. Other initiatives include community-based parking and connectivity for machines in the industrial IoT. Bosch has won four CES innovation awards this year, including an integrated connectivity cluster for two-wheeled vehicles (i.e., motorcycles), enabling riders to receive phone calls with controls on the handlebars.

Source: Fung Global Retail & Technology
Hyundai—Car of the Future Will Connect to the Smart Home

Hyundai’s head of product planning, Mike O’Brien, discussed the company’s next-generation ‘hyper-connectivity’ technology in which the car is able to connect and fully integrate to one’s home network. Hyundai says the car—or mobility concept—can become an integral part of the living space, performing functions and enhancing the environment. For example, the mobility concept can act as an air conditioner, share its entertainment facilities by mirroring audio and visual outputs with the home’s smart devices and even provide power in emergency situations. Hyundai is collaborating with Cisco to enhance connected car technology.

Toyota—New Concept Car

Toyota demonstrated its new concept car, Concept-I (or 爱), which uses AI to build the vehicle-driver relationship and make technology human. Dr. Gil Pratt of the Toyota Research Institute offered some remarks on driverless cars. His institute is focused on using AI to: 1) greatly enhance vehicle safety; 2) greatly increase mobility access; 3) heavily invest in robotics; and 4) accelerate discovery in materials science. He discussed the SAE 5 levels of automation, where level 5 represents cars that can drive under any conditions (no company is close to this) and levels 2–4 all require human intervention under certain circumstances. The current cars with autopilot have achieved Level 2, and Level 4 (autonomous only in certain domains) can likely be achieved by 2020. One of the goals of driverless cars is to reduce the 35,000 deaths from traffic deaths annually, however, these cars will have to be much safer.

Source: Fung Global Retail & Technology
ZF—ProAI Controller for Autonomous Vehicles

ZF is a global leader in driveline and chassis technology, as well as active and passive safety technology. It acquired TRW Automotive on May 15, 2015. The company’s motto at the show was, “See, Think, Act.” The company is working on a strategy to digitize its organization, R&D and products by 2025. ZF discussed X2SAFE, a technology platform that enables communication between vehicles and other road users (such as pedestrians and cyclists) and smartphones to reduce accidents. The company also announced ZF ProAI, a controller for autonomous vehicles (including industrial and passenger vehicles) that uses a chipset from Nvidia.

Source: Fung Global Retail & Technology