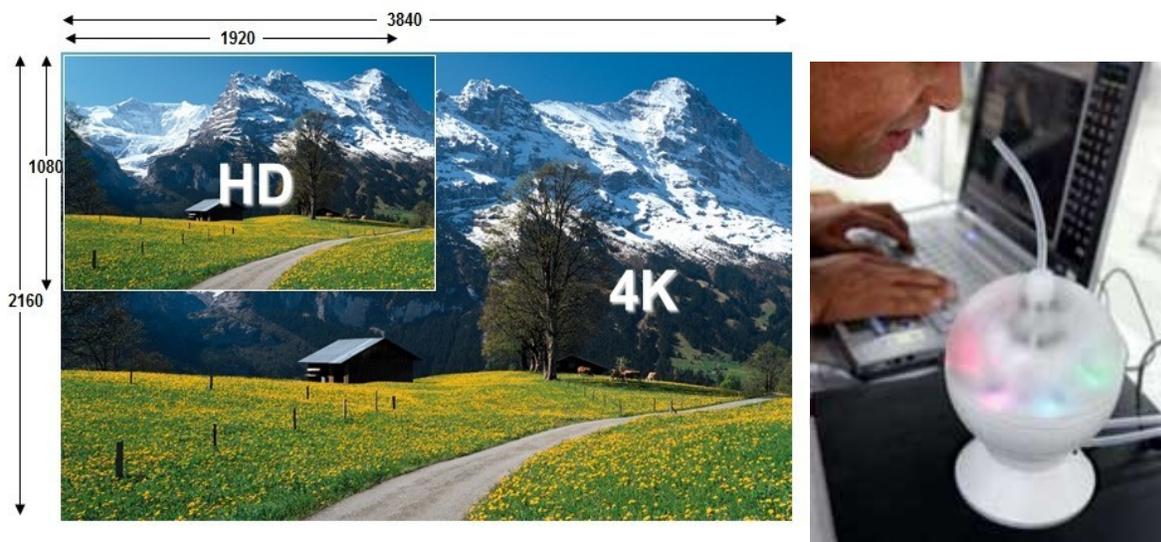


GEAR UP FOR GIZMOS



Whenever a new year rolls around, the tech industry eagerly awaits the popular **Consumer Electronics Show** held in Las Vegas, Nevada. This year's event broke all attendance records and no wonder, with breakthrough technologies being launched left and right. If one were to look into the future and guess what types of devices we will be using and influencing everything we do, then this is the place to see science fiction turning into reality.

As with any launch, there are trends to watch; if you have not heard or followed tech reports, here are the major highlights from this year's CES:

DRONES – Our September 2014 article on drones demonstrated the validity and growing popularity of this device. At **CES**, over 100 companies showed every size and shape of these Unmanned Aerial Vehicles, with the “Ghost” drone being a standout example: it operates via a Smartphone App where you click a virtual button and off it goes...no additional devices needed to operate it...makes you wonder how much havoc will result from this “toy”.

CARS - As more automakers infuse TV screens, flat panels, internet, etc. into their vehicles, the driverless car is creating quite a buzz. From cars that park themselves (seen those **Ford** commercials lately?) to those responding to hand gestures, one reporter predicts that in 2017 consumers will be buying these cars....well, probably only consumers who can afford over \$100,000 for one!

VIRTUAL REALITY – The world of video games is quickly taking advantage of the newest virtual reality headsets which include surround sound and immerse the player totally into the game. As a sign of its growing importance, Facebook recently paid \$2 billion for “Oculus”, its developer. With this sensory immersion into a game, we can expect a segment of the gaming public to buy into it for a completely different experience.

TV – Home theaters and SMART TVs are everywhere and this year’s introductory models flaunt 4K, 8K and Ultra HD – 4 times normal HD – with extra pixels and stronger colors. Even a 4K Blu-Ray player is scheduled for release later this year, although compatible discs are not yet available. It seems that larger screens and ultra-reality images are in demand by consumers and fabricators are trying their best to satisfy them.

NEW TECH – Beyond the usual devices, there are the helpful robots, wireless audio speakers, digital smelling machines, and wearable tech of every kind that sense and monitor just about anything you can imagine. And on the brink of release this Spring is the much-anticipated Apple Watch, an iPhone for your wrist.

In a nutshell, the newest, most daring and innovative technologies are constantly in motion and even though many may still be in pure testing mode, there is a strong chance that all of us will one day use some of these devices/Apps/software in ways we have not even thought of yet.