

2015 Mobile World Congress Recap

Couldn't make it to Barcelona for Mobile World Congress 2015? Read our recap to learn everything you need to know about the event and find out which of the 2,000 exhibiting companies were our favorites.

New Interfaces For Old Habits

Whether they manifest as sensors, wearables, or devices, new peripherals have the potential to change how we interact with the world around us. They're inherently personal and allow for new degrees of personalization:

- LG's new Urbane LTE smart watch features NFC payment support and built-in LTE, which enables it to send and receive calls and messages without a supporting smartphone.
- ProGlove, a sensor-based "smart glove," helps manufacturers boost performance by helping employees visualize difficult tasks.
- EVA, an AI virtual assistant, combines facial coding and emotion tracking technology to provide personalized information and recommendations.

Haptic Feedback A Key Feature

Haptic technology lets devices such as smartphones, fitness trackers, and smart watches emit subtle vibrations to communicate without distracting the user. The Yubi Navi, for instance, is a Nintendo Wii-like device that guides people to their destination with subtle tactile cues. Immersion Corporation, however, has a larger vision: they announced their Instinctive Alerts Framework for manufacturers and developers, which they hope will lead to standardized haptic alerts that will be consistent across devices.

Virtual Reality Steals The Show

Virtual reality has seen high levels of interest recently, with Facebook, Google, and Intel experimenting and investing in the space. One of the most surprising announcements at MWC15 was the HTC Vive VR headset, along with its partnership with Valve's Steam VR platform. With a great VR standard, a solid network of content developers, and a massive global audience, The HTC Vive is well-positioned to be the first widely adopted VR headset.

Other companies are developing solutions for interacting within the virtual space. The SOSO Brainno, for instance, is a prototype EEG wearable that analyzes a user's emotions, heart rate, and temperature. The goal is for it to be embedded into VR headsets so it can adapt to a user's environment and their emotional state in real-time.

5G, The Key to Connecting The Future

5G—a new wireless network standard that is expected to be implemented by 2020—will allow higher bandwidth and lower latency, which will be essential to powering new experiences like streaming VR, self-driving cars, and other connected devices. Companies demoing 5G-inspired experiences at MWC15 included Ericsson with Volvo and Telstra, Huawei and Japanese mobile service provider NTT Docomo, and Alerta & China Mobile.

Power Is Currency

As we saw at CES 2015, wireless charging has been gaining momentum but still hasn't been seen at scale. IKEA plans to change that, debuting a range of furniture products that will have built-in wireless charging technology as of April 2015. The furniture will use the Qi wireless charging standard, which is already built into cases and phones, some cars, airports, and hotels.

Rise of the Robots

Qbo, owned by Thecorpora, featured an AI-driven robot that has the ability to identify itself and be programmed to recognize identity. The company's vision is to build a robot that is not designed for singular tasks, but rather, function as a companion. On the other end of the spectrum, SK Telecom's 5G-connected robot mirrored human movement without latency thanks to the use of a sensor-emitting exoskeleton.

For more coverage on Mobile World Congress and other emerging media trends, visit ipglab.com.