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CES 2021 KEYNOTE PREVIEW

NOVEMBER/DECEMBER 2020

THE AUTO INDUSTRY RESPONDS TO COVID-19 WITH TECH SOLUTIONS

8K GETS BIGGER AS VIDEO SERVICES DIVERSIFY

CRUTCHFIELD CORPORATION'S FOUNDER AND CEO

Bill Crutchfield

Shares his inspiring retail story.

Consumer Technology Association™   CES

Zooming Like a Pro

In December 2019, Zoom had 10 million daily users. In the second quarter (April, May and June) of 2020, Zoom's app was downloaded 300 million times: 94 million from Apple's App Store (shattering the previous record of 50 million downloads for a non-gaming application) and more than 200 million times from Google Play.

Courtesy of Zoom

During the pandemic, Zoom has become the go-to video conferencing service — downloaded at six times the rate of any other competitor:

According to Gartner, 54% of business leaders say that poor technology and/or infrastructure for remote working is the biggest barrier to effective remote working in their organization.

Given how much people are zooming from home for work, how can you easily create a professional setup? Companies like Google, Spotify and Twitter are giving employees a budget to get an ergonomic chair and the tech required to have a professional work from home environment. Since the IT department cannot drop by to help you, what peripherals are high-quality, easy to set up and simple to use?

Web Cam

The Logitech Brio 4K is amazing. On Zoom calls, I always have the highest resolution video. The images are so crisp that you can read the titles on my bookshelf. The USB cam is easy to set up. Most importantly the camera automatically adjusts given the lighting. In the three months following the global lock down, Logitech sold as many peripherals as in all of 2019.

Microphone

I've been using a Blue Yeti USB microphone for years, and I love it. I have also been testing Rode's new NT-USB mini and it's great. You can get it with a stand or with an arm making you look like a radio show host with a mike in front of your mouth. You can also plug your earphones into the back of the microphone via a mini jack. Some microphones have an XLR plug and require a separate sound mixing board. Unless you are a musician, audiophile, or a radio show host, stick with a USB mike.

Helpful Tips

Sit facing a window with your computer and the web cam in front to achieve optimal lighting.

Think about a backdrop that looks professional. For example, bookcases stocked with your favorite business books create an atmosphere conducive to work.

If you want to impress clients put a monitor in the bookcase hooked up to an old laptop or computer and display your client's logo on it. Set the monitor to the lowest brightness.

Unless you have a perfectly evenly lit green screen behind you, forget the virtual backgrounds that Zoom offers. I have watched so many people on Zoom have parts of their head disappear during a call — magically blurring into the background — only to re-appear a minute later. It's unnerving and looks unprofessional.

To Sum It Up

The consequences of the pandemic are going to continue far longer than many people realize. Google has told its employees not to expect coming back to work until July 2021 at the earliest. And Dell Computers has said that half of its 165,000 employees will never come back to work — instead, they will be working from home making it more important than ever to have the right business set-up at home. ∎

Jim Harris is the author of Blindsided *which focuses on disruptive innovation. Follow him on Twitter @JimHarris or email jim@jimharris.com*

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