International CES: D-O IT!

by John Miller [images by Lee Lichtenstein]

D-O (Digital Only)

The anticipation outweighed the realization of CES 2022. Following the (disappointing) All-Virtual event that was CES 2021, many attendees were anxious to return to the actual touch and feel event in Las Vegas in 2022. And then a *variant* that shall remain nameless got in the way.

Cancellations by Lenovo, T-Mobile, Amazon, Meta, AT&T, Google, and AMD were significant setbacks for the show, but the bigger disappointments were the cancellations by the auto industry. CES has largely become the technical showcase for automotive manufacturers and suppliers. GM, Ford, BMW, Mercedes, Volvo, Mitsubishi (Electric), Waymo (Alphabet's self-driving car company) all changed their participation status to D-O (Digital-Only— no live person presence). Major auto suppliers Bosch, ZF, Magna International and Panasonic all cancelled in-person exhibits, along with assisted and autonomous-driving suppliers Mobileye, Velodyne Lidar and Veoneer. All told, 153

companies changed to "D-O" in the official CES exhibitor directory.

GM Chief Executive Mary Barra had been scheduled to give a keynote speech at the show on Jan. 5, during which the company would have shown its electric Silverado pickup truck. But Barra made the speech and presentation remotely and the introduction of a milestone vehicle for GM lost much of the impact.

The 2024 Chevy Silverado EV pickup shown at CES 2022 had a 6-figure price tag, although lower priced entry level versions in the $40,000 range are promised. GM's Ultium EV platform gives the Silverado EV enough power for an estimated 400 miles of range, beating out that of the Ford F-150 Lightning EV, but not beating it to market, as Ford will begin deliveries purportedly in spring 2022.

Among its specs, the Silverado EV WT and RST versions will get standard DC fast charging at up to 350 kW, enabling approximately 100 miles (161 km) of range to be added in 10 minutes (based on GM estimates). GM also stated the RST First Edition Silverado will include Super

Cruise™ hands-free driver assistance technology with trailering capability.

As with many EVs, the Silverado also has a lockable front trunk (in place of the traditional gas engine) called eTrunk that provides enough room to fit a large hard-side suitcase and a multitude of accessory options.

Chevrolet announced development of electric variants of both the Equinox and Blazer crossovers with a slated 2023 launch.GM is aiming for a starting price around $30,000 for the Equinox.

The digital unveiling of the Chrysler Airflow concept and the Mercedes Vision EQXX were mildly interesting, but Cadillac stole the trophy for most-impressive-concept, from both visual and technological perspectives. The Cadillac InnerSpace envisions automobiles in a time of personal self-driving mobility. The doors and roof open to a single bench-style seat spanning the car's width. Inside, a massive screen occupies the dashboard, giving the occupants a mobile entertainment center.

The line between automotive manufacture and automotive technology was crossed in

2022 by none other than Sony. Sony rolled out the Vision-S 02, an electric SUV. Roughly the same size as a Tesla Model Y,

the Vision-S 02 utilizes a pair of 268-horsepower electric motors to move around its 5,500-pound curb weight. The outside is somewhat reminiscent of a cross between a Tesla Model X and model 3. The interior is sparse, dominated by digital displays. Sony' announced its new mobility division will be established this spring to 'further explore entry into the EV market"

Furthering the debut and unveilings of automotive technologies at CES 2022, Google announced a new USB-A wireless adapter that can put (wireless) Android Auto into operation of older vehicles. On the software front, Android Automotive OS has gained greater third-party app integration.

While CES 2022 may have evolved into the Year of D-O (Digital Only displays), many attendees were looking at CES 2022 as a year of *D-O*, as in *DO OVER*.

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