5 Gadgets From CES That Are Ideal for Journalists

This year's Consumer Electronics Show is the second-largest in its history.

With 2,700 companies pitching products to 5,000 members of the press in Las Vegas, it's easy to get dazed and confused by the avalanche of over-hyped gadgets.

Here are five IJNet thinks are worth adding to your reporting toolkit as they come on the market.

iPhone tracking system. Billed as a way to track your wayward keys – or grandmother – this geo-location app system could be useful in a number of reporting situations. For $49, BIKN comes with a battery-powered case and two tags, one for your iPhone and the other to attach to whatever you're tracking – whether it's another reporter covering an event, a source going undercover or a camera set up for surveillance. The current range of the case, which has enough power to last a week, is roughly 100 to 150 meters, or about 328 to 490 feet. (Makers Treehouse labs say a forthcoming update will boost that range to 200 meters.) Up to eight tags can be leashed to one phone at a time.

Single AA Battery-Powered Cellphone. SpareOne is a $49 cellphone juiced by a single AA battery. Makers XPAL Power claim it delivers talk time of up to 10 hours and holds its charge for up to 15 years, with an Energizer Ultimate Lithium AA battery included. (Road warriors note: it can also be used with rechargeable batteries.) It will be offered as a dual-band GSM cellphone in Q1; versions with WCDMA frequency options for selected international regions will launch later.

Drone journalism starter toys. With a low price point ($100 to $120), the Wi-Spi line from Interactive Active Toy Concepts will propel a few experiments. There's a helicopter or car version. Both record video and pictures and beam live feeds to your iPhone or Android device. You can show off your surveillance work by sharing recorded video on social networking sites. Watch the skies for these in fall 2012.

Bluetooth camera remote and flex mount. Mojos will like this: for about $40, you can mount your iPhone or iPod touch then use the Click Stick to snap pictures via a Bluetooth headset with remote shutter control. The companion camera app also features filters, editing and sharing options. Creators Dexim say it will be available late February.

iPhone body camera. Miveu X is a great idea, though the clunky style – reminiscent of the homemade strap-on bomb in "30 Minutes or Less" – means you'll only use it when going undercover isn't the point. For about $80, the iPhone 4/4S case comes with an integrated wide angle lens converter and although the contraption looks complicated, the company says you can easily pull the phone out to ensure you're filming the action and not immortalizing your shoes.

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