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# The Best of CES

I saw a number of innovative and fun Windows Mobile products at this year's Computer Electronics Show (see page 30 for other great picks).

## All-in-one Pocket PC, GPS, and Phone

I ran into Dr. James Oyang, the CEO of Pharos and one of the nicest people I have met in our industry. He showed me a pre-production unit of their new phone-enabled GPS 600 Pocket PC with integrated GPS. When I arrived home, I found that Pharos had sent me a unit to preview. I was pretty busy for a few days, so I gave it to Sambit Bhattarai, the director of our Used Handhelds department ([UsedHandhelds.com](http://UsedHandhelds.com)). He got back to me in a couple of days, saying "I love this little monster... It's something I have been waiting for a while—one unit that does it all." Below is his list of pros and cons:



### PROS:

- Beautiful screen that is clearly visible even in the sunlight.
- Powerful GPS capabilities.
- Phone signal reception is better than on my iPAQ h6315.
- Incorporates an unlocked EDGE-capable GSM phone so it can be used just about anywhere.
- Comes with Wi-Fi, Bluetooth, a GPS receiver with Ostia navigation software, and an FM tuner, making it one of the most capable Windows Mobile devices on the market.
- The 2.0 megapixel camera with flash works great.
- Sensitive, high-quality microphone; voice recordings are very crisp and loud.
- A Windows Mobile 5 device that supports push e-mail. I haven't used this capability, but it seems like it would be helpful.
- Has a nice suite of add-on software, including Voice Commander, FM Tuner, Sim Toolkit, Ostia GPS navigation software and maps, and more.
- Very small and lightweight device that is easy to carry around.

### CONS:

- No built-in QWERTY thumb keyboard.

- Software suite does not include a backup program, which would certainly be helpful.
- I had some problems charging the device with the USB sync/charge cable, but none when using the AC power adapter that came with the device.
- Uses a microSD slot for expansion which currently limits you to a maximum of 2 GB of additional file storage.

It should be available by the time you read this through [PharosGPS.com](http://PharosGPS.com), other online stores, and national retail outlets.

## Bluetooth Roll-up keyboard

I also noticed a booth sporting one of the most intriguing products I have seen. The G-Tech Wireless Fabric Keyboard ([g-techworld.com](http://g-techworld.com)) is a cloth keyboard that rolls out and connects to your Windows Mobile device via Bluetooth! (It is also available from Just Mobile: [just-mobileonline.com](http://just-mobileonline.com).) Tim Hillebrand has already tried it. Here are some of his comments.

"You can roll it up and stuff it and the PDA holder that comes with it in a little black bag. The whole package weighs 3.75 ounces and measures 5 x 1.5" folded up... Unrolled, it is



about 13.5 x 4.5". On the right side is a black plastic module that houses the batteries and brains that run this amazing mobile device... It comes with one of those little 3.5" CDs that contains drivers and .pdf user manuals. There are drivers for the following devices: Windows Mobile 2003 for Pocket PC, Windows Mobile 5 for Pocket PC, Windows Mobile 2003 for Smartphones, Windows Mobile for Smartphones, Symbian S60 v2.0 or 2.1, UIQ v2.0 or 2.1, Palm Garnet 5.4, and RIM Blackberry v4.0 or higher...

"If you are a road warrior or attend many meetings and want to lighten the load, you can dump the obligatory laptop PC in favor of a Bluetooth-enabled Windows Mobile device and the Fabric Keyboard. Imagine the WOW factor when you pull out this powerful, portable package and unroll it on the conference table. I guarantee you will have everyone's immediate attention. You will, however, have to

adjust to its nuances, for it is a different touch and response experience than using a normal keyboard."

(Tim's complete review was published on 12/09/06 on [PocketPCmag.com/blogs](http://PocketPCmag.com/blogs).)

## Automatically convert voicemail to e-mail

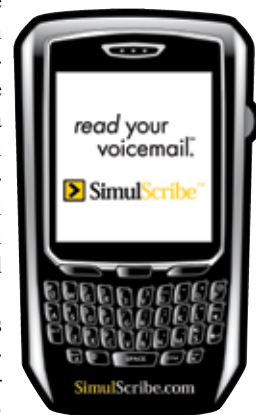
I was intrigued by a service offered by SimulScribe. The company's monthly service, Simul40, converts voicemail to text and delivers it via e-mail/SMS. Voicemail transcribed through SimulScribe arrives as an e-mail in near real-time with the caller's phone number in the subject line, the transcribed voice message in the e-mail body, and a .wav file of the original voice message as an attachment. Users can still dial into their voicemail the old fashion way should they want to.

SimulScribe accounts feature unlimited voicemail storage, so users never have to worry about callers hearing "Sorry, this mailbox is full." There is also an online interface where subscribers can log on to manage, read, listen to, and delete voicemail with a single click. The voicemail transcriptions are very accurate—the company boasts its voice recognition as having over 90 percent transcription accuracy.

The service costs \$9.95 per month for 40 transcribed voicemail messages and \$.25 per message thereafter for the rest of the month. SimulScribe works with all wireless and most wire-line network providers, and new users can sign up directly through the company's Web site ([SimulScribe.com](http://SimulScribe.com)).

## Wi-Fi, Video Out, and GPS receivers using the mini and microSD memory slot

It is great to see so many elegantly designed, thin, and small Windows Mobile phones. Unfortunately, the size of the expansion slot also keeps getting smaller on these devices. SD slots used to be the norm, but now we're seeing devices with miniSD and microSD slots. The problem is that other than file storage cards, there's very little else available in these card formats.



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