

Tech industry expo opens portal to tomorrow

Notes & Cues:**Article:**

The show must go on.

That sentiment couldn't have been stronger this week at CES, the largest consumer electronics convention in the country. The conference, which brought more than 180, 000 people to Las Vegas, was a reminder of what the tech industry is best at: being optimistic about itself.

The conference offered a peek at the year's hottest tech trends, including artificially intelligent virtual assistants, next-generation wireless networks and connected cars.

Front and center at CES was the battle between virtual assistants. Aaron Emigh, chief executive of Brilliant, which makes smart home products that work with Alexa, Google Assistant and Siri, said it was critical for virtual assistants to work together, not against one another, because the smart home was already too complex, with products like light switches, thermostats and cameras coming from different brands.

Wireless carriers and chipmakers highlighted 5G, the next-generation cellular network arriving this year in a small number of cities with data speeds so zippy that devices can download an entire movie in seconds.

Car manufacturers like Mercedes-Benz and BMW showed off concepts of autonomous vehicles powered by AI and 5G wireless connections. Smarter cars with features like built-in voice assistants to help people use maps, play music or get a sports update without taking their eyes off the road are available now.

Matt Strauss, a Comcast executive, was especially bullish about the year ahead. He said just about everything announced at CES required an Internet connection, so that's the last thing that people would cut off.

"It's become like oxygen, " he said.

Summary: