

What We Learned @IMTS

The Addendum team recently spent six successful days roaming Chicago's McCormick Place during IMTS 2012.

If the foot traffic was any indication, (the 100,000th registrant stopped by on the last day of the show) the manufacturing sector is set for bigger and brighter things in 2013. While attendance was the big news, the real stars of IMTS were the exhibitors. Here's a quick tongue-in-cheek rundown from the six-day manufacturing technology event:

- A three-man crew can build a rally car in six days in between photo ops, television interviews and annoying questions from over-caffeinated B2B editors.



Through the use of an online open design platform, Local Motors co-creates innovative components and vehicles, like the Rally Fighter built during IMTS.

- Enticing America's youth for engineering and manufacturing positions is extremely vital, particularly when one company's 92-year-old engineer is putting in 60-hour work weeks.
- Multifunctional machining is getting crazier by the second. Soon, these machine tools will completely machine a part, serve you Starbucks coffee and schedule to pick your kids up from school.
- One attendee suggested changing the name of the South Hall to "DMG/Mori Seiki and Friends" after getting lost in the middle of their booth.
- McCormick Place is no place to be without a comfortable pair of shoes.
- MAG-IAS cryogenic machining demonstration reminded us of Han Solo getting frozen in carbonite—if Han Solo was a cutting insert.
- Hologram trade show presentations are equal parts cool and creepy.
- It took the same amount of time to find the shuttle service as it did to walk to the East Hall and back.
- In related news: It took the same amount of time to walk the East Hall as it did to catch a cab.

- IMTS attendees love pens. It doesn't matter if they're actually giveaways or just a couple of old Bics. They'll take whatever is not anchored to the table. Stock accordingly.
- Were the high school and college kids scouring the booths for career information or just looking to sign up for all the I-Pad raffles?
- Blackjack dealing robots are coming soon to a casino near you.
- Did anyone else need a compass, a map and perhaps GPS to find the IANA conference at the back of the East Hall?
- If a Chicago Bear and Green Bay Packer fan can eat lunch together at IMTS without incident, we should be able to put politics aside and fix U.S. manufacturing.
- Ingersoll Cutting Tools knows how to get a large group of people to stop what they're doing and hang out in their booth (cue the music).
- Is it a good or bad idea to have sparks flying across a crowded walkway during a North Hall machine demonstration?
- IMTS Suggestion Box: Sandvik Coromant and FANUC trade in their signature "yellow" for "fuchsia" in 2014 (just to mix things up).



Science fiction and manufacturing collided head-on at the Yaskawa Motoman booth during IMTS in Chicago (all photos by Dave Ropinski).

- Is it too soon to send out a press release on IMTS 2014?

All kidding aside it was a great show and congrats goes out to AMT and Gardner Business Media for another successful event. Thanks to everyone who stopped by the *Gear Technology/PTE* booth or joined us at our "The Perfect Mesh" cocktail reception. Hope to see everyone again in 2014. Please feel free to share your insights and observations of IMTS 2012 by sending an e-mail to publisher@geartechnology.com. 

Photos by David Ropinski