

Major tech firms join Consumer Electronics Show exodus

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The Consumer Electronics Show was banking on a grand return to in-person attendance of the popular gadget extravaganza in January 2022, but the Omicron variant of the coronavirus has prompted several major tech firms to cancel.

Big-name tech firms such as Google, Lenovo and Intel on Thursday

cancelled plans to attend next month's Consumer Electronics Show in Las Vegas, joining an exodus fueled by fear of Covid-19.

The three are part of a growing list of companies opting not to put employees at risk by staffing events, exhibits or briefings at the annual gadget extravaganza.

"After careful consideration we have decided to withhold from having a presence on the show floor of CES 2022," a spokesperson with US internet giant Google said.

"We've been closely monitoring the development of the Omicron variant, and have decided that this is the best choice for the health and safety of our teams."

The Waymo self-driving car unit of Google-parent Alphabet also hit the brakes, saying it would take part virtually.

China-based computer colossus Lenovo said on Twitter it decided to "suspend all on-site activity" at the show.

And US chipmaker Intel told AFP that after consulting with [health officials](#), it "will move to a digital-first, live experience, with minimal on-site staff" to reduce risk.

The news came on the heels of several other major companies cancelling or scaling back their plans due to Covid-19 variant Omicron's rapid spread.

The popular four-day conference, which had planned for a grand return, is still scheduled to start January 5.

But this week Facebook parent company Meta, Amazon, T-Mobile and

Twitter canceled their appearances.

Key tech world publications including CNET, The Verge and TechCrunch said they will no longer send reporters to cover the event, adding to growing suspicions that CES might have to be delayed or canceled.

The show's organizer, the Consumer Technology Association, put out word last week that the number of exhibitors confirmed to attend had topped 2,100 and that it would offer free Covid-19 rapid testing kits to attendees as an added level of safety.

On its site, CES reminds all attendees that they must be fully vaccinated.

Another major conference planned for January, the World Economic Forum, announced Monday it would delay its annual meeting in Davos, Switzerland, due to Omicron.

The gathering of the world's political and business elite will go ahead in "early summer," according to organizers.

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