

Gartner: PCs Down, Mobiles and Tablets Up

Written by Marco Attard
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Gartner forecasts double digit declines of -10.6% for global 2013 PC (desktop and notebook) shipments, even as the overall "devices" market (covering PCs, tablets and mobiles) should reach shipments of 2.35 billion units with 5.9% growth.

Such a decline reflects not only shifting customer demands but also adjustments in the channel making room for H2 2013 product launches.

According to the analyst PC shipments will total 305 million units in 2013. The decline is offset somewhat to -7.3% if one counts ultramobile PCs-- bringing some good news to the thin, lightweight notebooks of the Chromebook or Ultrabook variety.

Worldwide Devices Shipments by Segment (Thousands of Units)

Device Type	2012	2013	2014
PC (Desk-Based and Notebook)	341,273	305,178	289,239
Ultramobile	9,787	20,301	39,824
Tablet	120,203	201,825	276,178
Mobile Phone	1,746,177	1,821,193	1901,188
Total	2,217,440	2,348,497	2,506,429

Source: Gartner (June 2013)

Ultramobile PC demand comes from upgrades over both regular notebooks and premium tablets (such as the iPad or Galaxy Tab 10.1) and should be even more evident come Q4 2013, once Bay Trail- and Haswell-based Windows 8.1 models hit the shelves.

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Such devices will only help overall sales "marginally," but still boost vendor ASPs and margins.

Meanwhile 2013 tablet shipments are set to grow by 67.9% to 202m units and mobile phones volume should reach 1.8bn units with 4.3% growth.

"Consumers want anytime-anywhere computing that allows them to consume and create content with ease, but also share and access that content from a different portfolio of products," Gartner says. "Mobility is paramount in both mature and emerging markets."

The tablet and smartphone markets already face a number of challenges-- the devices are gaining longer life cycles, and consumers are shifting from premium to basic tablets (for instance the iPad mini already represents 60% of overall Q1 2013 iOS tablet sales).

When it comes to operating systems, all options appear to have "the same relevance in all segments" even if Android is the shipment king (Android device shipments total 86.6m units for 2013 before growing to 1bn in 2014). However 90% of Android sales are in the mobile market, while 85% of Microsoft sales are in the PC market and Apple has the most uniform presence across device segments.

The enterprise segment will also see an increase in consumer-owned devices-- Gartner forecasts the bring your own device (BYOD) trend is set fuel consumer-bought device use from 65% in 2013 to 72% in 2017.

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