

# A billion smart devices are being used

WASHINGTON, USA: Tablet computers fueled growth in 2012 in the market for "smart connected devices," which crossed the threshold of one billion units for the first time, according to a study released on Tuesday (26 March).



A report by the research firm IDC said worldwide shipments of these devices, personal computers, tablets and smartphones, grew 29.1% in 2012 to 1.2bn units with a value of US\$576.9bn.

The expansion was largely driven by 78.4% growth in tablet shipments, which reached 128m in 2012. IDC said sales of desktop and portable personal computers fell 4.1% and 3.4% respectively, for the year, while smartphone sales were up 46%.

Looking ahead, IDC forecast that tablet shipments would pass desktop PC sales in 2013 and portable PCs in 2014. It predicted tablet sales would grow another 48.7% this year to 190m units.

The smartphone market is expected to grow 27.2% to 918.5m units, IDC said. Sales of traditional PCs will struggle again, especially in emerging economies.

"In emerging markets, consumer spending typically starts with mobile phones and, in many cases, moves to tablets before PCs," said IDC analyst Megha Saini. "The pressure on the PC market is significantly increasing and we can see longer replacement cycles coming into effect very soon and that, too, will put pressure on PC sales."

IDC said Apple closed the gap with market leader Samsung in the fourth quarter, as the combination of Apple's iPhone 5 and iPad Mini brought Apple up to a market share of 20.3% compared with 21.2% for Samsung for similar devices.

But because Apple devices are pricier, the US firm had 30.7% of revenues compared with the 20.4% held by Samsung.

IDC predicts that worldwide sales of smart devices will continue to grow with shipments hitting 2.2bn units generating revenues of US\$814.3bn by 2017.

Source: *AFP* via I-Net Bridge

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