

Record 12 pct drop for PC sales in 2009: Gartner

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Consumers shop for laptop computers at a computer mart in Ningbo on October 15, 2008 in eastern China's Zhejiang province. Sales of personal computers are expected to decline by 11.9 percent to 257 million units in 2009, the steepest drop in the industry's history, market research firm Gartner said Monday.

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"The PC industry is facing extraordinary conditions as the global economy continues to weaken, users stretch PC lifetimes and PC suppliers grow increasingly cautious," said Gartner research director George Shiffler.

The decline in PC sales in 2009 would be the worst since 2001, when

unit shipments contracted 3.2 percent, Gartner said in a statement.

Both emerging and mature markets were also set to suffer unprecedented market slowdowns in 2009 with PC sales declining by 10.4 percent over last year in emerging markets and by 13 percent in mature markets.

Gartner said the previous lowest growth in emerging markets was 11.1 percent in 2002, while mature markets recorded their lowest growth in 2001, negative 7.9 percent.

Worldwide mobile PC shipments were expected to reach 155.6 million units in 2009, a nine percent increase from 2008, the research firm added.

It said desktop PC shipments were forecast to total 101.4 million units, a 31.9 per cent decline from 2008.

Much of the growth in mobile PC sales will be fuelled by shipments of mini-notebooks, Gartner said, although they were forecast to represent just eight percent of PC shipments in 2009.

Worldwide mini-notebook shipments were expected to total 21 million units in 2009, up from 11.7 million units in 2008.

Excluding mini-notebooks, mobile PC sales will grow by just 2.7 per cent in 2009, Gartner said.

"Mature markets continue to be the primary consumers of mini-notebooks, but as prices continue to fall, they are likely to attract increasing numbers of emerging market buyers," said Angela McIntyre, another Gartner research director.

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