

Lenovo tailors Thinkpads for entrepreneurs

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The dual screen Thinkpad W700ds by Lenovo is displayed at the 2009 Consumer Electronics Show (CES) in Las Vegas, Nevada. Lenovo is taking aim at the booming small business market with a new line of ThinkPad notebook computers tailored for entrepreneurs.

Chinese technology giant Lenovo is taking aim at the booming small business market with a new line of ThinkPad notebook computers tailored for entrepreneurs.

Lenovo's ThinkPad Edge line redesigns technology long relied on by global corporations to fit the needs and preferences of operators whose territory may be smaller but is no less precious.

Analysts project the number of small businesses worldwide will climb to 45 million in 2010 and that they will account for two-thirds of the [notebook](#) computers sold.

"Small business is an enormous market and it is growing fast," Lenovo Thinkpad notebooks segment manager Charles Sune told AFP while providing a glimpse at the new Edge models.

Thinkpad machines have become a staple among corporations interested in notebooks geared to handle the performance and security demands of executives.

The Edge design is the first significant change to the Thinkpad design in 17 years and for the first time ever adds AMD microprocessors to machines that had been driven exclusively by Intel chips.

Neo AMD chips provide Edge computers with high graphics performance while enabling Lenovo to offer a base model for 550 dollars. Some 70 percent of the laptops sold are priced less than 1,000 dollars.

"AMD brings better performance in that price range in graphics," Sune said. "This is not a replacement; this is complementary. At the top of the line, Intel is still great technology."

Edge notebooks have Lenovo's trademark full keyboard, but the keys were reshaped to have larger tops and the top row re-assigned to functions such as web cameras and [Internet telephony](#) that are of interest to small businesses.

Edge models also come pre-loaded with Internet telephone service Skype.

In another first, Lenovo is expanding from basic black Thinkpad models to offer Edge in glossy red.

"It is our belief these platforms will give an edge to small businesses

based on the Thinkpad DNA that we include to make these truly business quality notebooks," Sune said.

Thinkpads have traditionally targeted government agencies, academic institutions, corporations and other large organizations.

Lenovo has also reacted to growing interest in netbooks, bare-bones laptops built to perform a few basic applications and act as gateways to software offered as services in the Internet "cloud."

Sune showed off an X100e model that he referred to as an "ultraportable" instead of a netbook.

Large corporations are showing intense interest in lightweight, inexpensive ultraportable computers that can serve as "second-use machines" for employees on the go, according to Lenovo.

Lenovo gave the X100e a screen nearly an inch and a half bigger than 10.1-inch displays typical in netbooks. The computer giant also kept its full size keyboard, confident that it is what users like.

Lenovo's ultraportable machines will combine AMD and Intel chips and be available in red as well as black. Prices for X100e models will start at 449 dollars and can be customized, with 699 dollars described by Sune as a "real sweet spot" in terms of performance value.

"We will sell to individuals, schools, and small business certainly, but the focus is it being a business solution in this size form factor and at these price points," Sune said.

Lenovo is continuing its commitment to its classic ThinkPad line with upgraded T models that are the thinnest and lightest in what has been the best selling platform in the company's portfolio.

Lenovo is also adding Nvidia graphics technology to new T models.

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