

Global downturn a thing of the past for Asia's top IT show

June 6 2010, by Ben Yeh



An overall view of an exhibition venue of Computex Taipei at the Taipei World Trade Centre. If Asia's largest IT fair, the just-concluded Computex, is anything to go by, the high-tech industry is emerging rapidly from the global crisis: business was brisk during the five-day event in Taipei. Around 120,000 people visited the fair, including 35,000 international buyers.

If Asia's largest IT fair, the just-concluded Computex, is anything to go by, the high-tech industry is emerging rapidly from the global crisis: business was brisk during the five-day event in Taipei.

The IT extravaganza, which ended Friday, was also energised by the launch of new applications ranging from tablet computers feeding off the iPad mania, to products that measure stress and to Internet technology threatening to make the PC as we know it obsolete.

"The global economy is much better than at the same period last year," said Chang Li, deputy secretary-general of the Taipei Computer Association.

"That gave the companies more confidence and encouraged them to display their latest product lines at the show."

A total of 1,715 exhibitors, including about 1,300 from the tech-savvy island, took part in an event which featured 4,861 booths, a rise of eight percent from 2009, the organisers said.

"The demand was so strong that hundreds of firms had to be shut out of the exhibition venues," Chang said.

To a greater extent than in previous years, the organisers also focused on clients from emerging economies such as Russia, India and Turkey, as the global downturn cooled interest somewhat in the old, mature economies of the West.

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Roughly 2,000 one-on-one procurement meetings arranged by the organisers during the fair generated on-site business worth 230 million US dollars, according to preliminary data published Saturday.

US technology giant Apple was a major presence in the show, and not only for attracting a group of activists protesting outside the venue against work conditions at Chinese factories that produce its iconic iPad and [iPhone](#).

Apple's iPad has triggered unprecedented interest in tablet computers, and Asustek, a leading Taiwanese computer manufacturer, picked the

day before the opening of Computex to launch its Eee Tablet and Eee Pad.

"I'm afraid we have to give credit to Apple," said Beck Lee, a spokesman for Asustek. "Tablet products are now much more readily accepted by users."

Tablet computers, like smartphones which enable users to access the Internet at any time and anywhere, are closely linked to "cloud computing," another major theme of the trade fair.

The concept refers to applications or data storage hosted online by technology firms instead of being installed and maintained on users' machines.

Microsoft used Computex to announce a Taiwan research centre devoted exclusively to cloud computing.

It was a step that Steven Guggenheimer, a vice president with the US software giant, referred to as a "milestone... in the era of cloud computing".

There were other potential milestones. Exhibitors also displayed televisions and PCs broadcasting three-dimensional images at the exhibition venues to meet the interest generated by James Cameron's 3D blockbuster "Avatar."

Trade shows like this are about winning hearts and minds -- and spotting the right trend at the right moment. Personal healthcare is one area on which many companies are banking as the next big money earner.

The BioDynamic Signature technology, unveiled by Israeli high-tech company IDesia, uses a person's unique heartbeat to tell whether they

need to take some time out to relax.

But [Computex](#) may have shown that, for the IT sector as a whole, the opposite holds true and that the time for relaxing, brought about by the global downturn, is finally over.

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