

Global PC shipments up 22 pct as businesses spend

July 14 2010, By JESSICA MINTZ , AP Technology Writer

(AP) -- Market research group IDC said Wednesday that worldwide shipments of personal computers climbed 22.4 percent in the second quarter as businesses replaced aging computers and consumers continued to show interest in inexpensive laptops.

The growth came in half a percentage point less than predicted because of slightly lower PC shipments in the U.S. and Asia. IDC analyst Loren Loverde said the group will likely reduce estimates for the current quarter and the rest of the year slightly, but he still calls the industry's performance in the quarter "quite good."

Businesses that stopped buying new technology during the worst of the recession have started replacing PCs, IDC says. That contributed to the rise in the quarter.

But Loverde said that doesn't mean the industry should expect to see a dramatic surge in demand for PCs in the coming months. As PC processors become more powerful, it's not as critical for many businesses to furnish employees with the most up-to-date technology. As a result, more companies are hanging on to older computers longer and replacing them on an as-needed basis, the analyst said.

In all, PC makers shipped 81.5 million computers in the quarter. Hewlett-Packard Co. remained the top computer maker in the world, followed by Dell Inc. and Acer Inc. Lenovo Group Ltd., Toshiba Corp. and AsusTek Computer Inc. rounded out IDC's top-six list.

Consumers still sought out low-end laptops and netbooks - computers that are even less expensive, but also less powerful. However, Loverde said consumer PC buying seems to be slowing in the U.S. as big business spending picks up.

That has helped Dell overtake Acer and reclaim the No. 2 spot. Dell relies on corporations for much of its business, while Acer is more focused on consumers.

In the U.S., PC shipments rose 12.6 percent. HP, Dell and Acer were the top three. No. 4 Apple Inc. shipped 15.4 percent more of its Mac computers in the quarter. Toshiba was fifth.

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