

Gartner cuts second-half PC growth forecast

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Boxes of Hewlett-Packard desktop computers are stocked on a shelf at a Best Buy store on February 2008 in San Francisco, California. Gartner slashed its growth forecast for personal computer sales for the second half of the year on Tuesday, citing the uncertain economic outlook for the United States and Western Europe.

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The technology research and advisory company said worldwide PC sales were expected to grow 15.3 percent in the second half of the year, two percent below the previous forecast.

For the year, Gartner said it expected worldwide PC sales to total 367.8 million units, up 19.2 percent from the 308.3 million units shipped in

2009.

"The PC [market](#) revived in the first half of 2010, but the real test of its resilience is yet to come," [Gartner research](#) director Ranjit Atwal said.

Atwal said Gartner was reducing its second-half growth forecast "in light of the uncertain economic outlook for the United States and Western Europe.

"There is no doubt that consumer, if not business PC demand has slowed relative to expectations in mature markets," he said.

"The slow pace of economic recovery and austerity measures in Europe have made PC suppliers very cautious in 2010," he continued.

"However, consumer demand is likely to remain strong even if the economic recovery stalls because consumers now view the PC as a relative 'necessity' rather than a 'luxury.'"

Gartner also said that the impact of the low-cost mini-notebook computer on the PC market has peaked and is now waning.

Research analyst Raphael Vasquez said the mini-notebook share of the mobile PC market declined for the second consecutive quarter in the second quarter of 2010, falling under 18 percent after reaching nearly 20 percent in late 2009.

Mini-notebooks' share is expected to continue falling until it reaches around 10 percent by late 2014, Gartner said.

"Mini-notebooks are slowly but surely carving out a market niche for themselves as companion devices," Vasquez said. "However, the emergence of media tablets is a growing threat to that niche."

Research director George Shiffler said Apple's iPad [tablet computer](#) "hasn't had much of an impact on mini-notebook units so far, if only because it is generally priced higher than most mini-notebooks.

"However, we anticipate lower-priced [iPad](#) imitations will begin to take larger bites out of mini-notebook units as they are released next year," he said.

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