

Mobile sales up 32 percent last year: Gartner

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Worldwide mobile sales increased 32 percent last year and smartphone shipments surpassed those of personal computers for the first time in the fourth quarter, according to tracking firms.

Technology research firm Gartner said Wednesday that mobile device sales rose 31.8 percent last year to 1.6 billion units over the previous year.

Smartphone sales soared 72.1 percent in 2010 over the previous year and accounted for 19 percent of total mobile sales last year, Gartner said.

Another tracking firm, International Data Corp. (IDC), reported meanwhile that vendors shipped a record 100.9 million smartphones in the fourth quarter, up 87.2 percent from the same quarter a year ago.

Global personal computer shipments in the fourth quarter of 92.1 million units were a record high, according to IDC, but were less for the first time than the number of smartphones shipped during a quarter.

Gartner said Apple, maker of the [iPhone](#), and Canada's [Research In Motion](#) (RIM), maker of the Blackberry, displaced Sony Ericsson and Motorola in the fourth quarter in the rankings of the world's largest mobile manufacturers.

Finland's Nokia remained number one overall with sales of 461.3 [mobile devices](#) last year but its market share fell from 36.4 percent at the end of 2009 to 28.9 percent at the end of 2010.

South Korea's Samsung was next with sales of 281.1 million units in 2010. Its market share fell from 19.5 percent to 17.6 percent.

South Korea's [LG Electronics](#) was in third place with sales of 114.1 million units and a market share of 7.1 percent, down from 10.1 percent.

RIM was next with sales of 47.4 million units and a market share which rose from 2.8 percent to 3.0 percent.

Apple sold 46.6 million units in 2010 and saw its market share increase from 2.1 percent to 2.9 percent.

[Sony Ericsson](#) had sales of 41.8 million units. Its market share fell to 2.6 percent from 4.5 percent. Motorola sold 38.5 million units and its market share fell to 2.4 percent from 4.8 percent.

Nokia and LG's drop in market share was due in part to their failure to make more of an impact in the rapidly growing smartphone market.

"Nokia and LG saw their market share erode in 2010 as they came under increasing pressure to refine their smartphone strategies," said Carolina Milanesi, research vice president at Gartner.

Nokia's chief executive Stephen Elop warned Wednesday that the world's top mobile phone maker is "standing on a burning platform" surrounded by a "blazing fire" of competition.

The brutally honest appraisal of the company's woes appeared to be setting the scene for a spectacular shake-up which Elop is expected to unveil on Friday at a strategy and financial briefing in London.

The Wall Street Journal said Nokia may announce a partnership with Microsoft, Elop's former employer, or Google or both to adopt a new

handset operating system.

Google's Android [smartphone](#) operating system grew 888.8 percent last year to take the number two position behind Symbian, according to [Gartner](#).

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