

# Lenovo launches 'LePad' tablet in China

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Chinese computer giant Lenovo has warned that supplies of its just-released tablet computer could be restricted after the earthquake and tsunami in Japan disrupted production of memory chips.

The LePad -- powered by Google's Android software -- was launched in China on Monday at a Chinese-media only event as Lenovo seeks to compete for a share of an increasingly crowded market dominated by Apple's [iPad](#).

Lenovo will begin selling LePad directly to Chinese consumers this week through its own retail stores and will put it on sale outside China by June, spokesman Jay Chen told Dow Jones Newswires.

But Lenovo vice president Chen Xudong said stocks of the devices could be hit after the twin disaster in Japan led to the supply squeeze, the firm said.

The quake-tsunami on March 11 led to the closure of hundreds of factories in Japan and the breaking of supply chains crucial to making cars, [electronic gadgets](#) and machinery.

Lenovo did not say how long the possible disruption could last.

The news comes after research firm IHS iSuppli said last week that Apple could face shortages of components for its new iPad 2 because of the earthquake and tsunami.

Other companies are facing similar problems. ZTE Corp, a Chinese maker of telecoms equipment, said last week it expected supply problems from Japan to last for the next three to six months.



Yang Yuanqing, CEO of China's biggest PC maker Lenovo, launches the company's new tablet computer, LePad, in Beijing on March 7. The IT giant has unveiled its new tablet computer for the domestic market in a bid to compete for a share of an increasingly crowded sector dominated by Apple's iPad.

Lenovo said in a statement that it was aggressively pursuing the mobile Internet device business and established a special division -- the Mobile Internet and Digital Home Business Group -- this year to better compete.

"The LePad is the first major launch since the business group's founding, we are confident in it and will continue to enrich its product line with better performing products and a richer selection of styles," Lenovo said.

In addition to the iPad, Lenovo's new tablet will compete against gadgets from other major electronics companies such as Dell, Samsung Electronics and BlackBerry-maker [Research In Motion](#).

It faces tough competition. Apple's iPad accounted for 73 percent of the global tablet market in the fourth quarter, according to data from IDC intelligence firm while Samsung's Galaxy Tab had more than 17 percent market share.

LePad -- which was first unveiled in January at the Consumer Electronics Show in Las Vegas -- has a 10.1-inch (26 centimetre) colour screen and connects to the Internet using WiFi or 3G telecom services.

In China, models equipped with WiFi wireless technology will carry a recommended price tag of 3,499 yuan (\$533) for the 16-gigabyte version, the company said.

It did not say when it would go on sale, but pre-orders began on March 16.

Lenovo, which bought IBM's PC business in 2004 for \$1.25 billion, had roughly 27 percent of its home market last year and was ranked fourth globally with a share of about eight percent, IDC said.

Research firm Gartner estimates total tablet shipments will reach 54.8 million units in 2011, draining demand for laptops and notebook computers.

Apple sold 15 million iPads last year, generating \$10 billion in revenue and establishing the multi-tasking device as a "must-have" consumer item for many.

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