

Fusion of work and play shapes Lenovo laptops

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The Lenovo IdeaPad U1 Hybrid device, which combines LePad, a 10-inch Android-powered tablet (L) with a Windows-powered base station.

Chinese computer colossus Lenovo is infusing its leading business laptops with more fun features as Internet Age lifestyles blur lines between work and play.

Lenovo was at the San Francisco headquarters of Dolby Laboratories this week to show off theater quality sound, rich viewing and quick

graphics handling in a ThinkPad [laptop computer](#) line that has become a top choice for businesses.

"We are adding elements that are more relevant and interesting to consumers," ThinkPad marketing director Tom Butler said while demonstrating new features that included audio enhanced with Dolby Home Theater 4.

Long popular with big corporations, Lenovo recently launched ThinkPad models aimed at small businesses whose operators tend to shop for gear at retail shops and whose employees increasingly make work computers part of home lives.

"We see a clear merger of consumer and business in the small business space," Butler said.

"At the same time workers are using systems 24 hours a day, seven days a week," he continued. "They are taking them home and checking personal email, searching the Web, playing music videos and other multi-media."

Dolby software added to freshly released ThinkPad [laptop](#) models dramatically ramps up the quality of any audio from film soundtracks or music to Internet conference calls.

"Even though you are listening over [stereo speakers](#) we are able to create a virtual surround-sound experience," said Kevin Brennan of Dolby.

"We are trying to re-create the immersive, cinematic experience that you enjoy at the movies, but on your personal computer," he continued.

Lenovo is the first to put Dolby Home Theater 4 on a business computer, according to Brennan.

"Lenovo is walking the walk and talking the talk by incorporating new features," he said.

Digital lifestyle enhancements included game-speed graphics, vivid screens, and HDMI ports for routing films or other data-rich digital content to [high-definition television](#) screens or muscular speakers.

ThinkPad laptops had keys devoted to quickly launching multimedia and slot-loading for DVDs.



An arcade docking station featuring a Lenovo IdeaPad. Chinese computer colossus Lenovo is infusing its leading business laptops with more fun features as Internet Age lifestyles blur lines between work and play.

"There is going to be a coolness factor to Lenovo's brand," said Lenovo 'ambassador' Stephen Miller.

"Like houses and phones, a computer says something about who you are," he continued. "We understand there has to be this consumerization feel."

Lenovo is the world's top seller of business laptops and the fourth largest computer company overall, according to Miller.

Lenovo's Bill Dominici provided an early look at an Edge 91Z all-in-one desktop computer hitting the market.

All the computing hardware was built into a sleek 2.5-inch (6.4 centimeter) thick black monitor with a 21.5-inch (54.6 centimeter) screen boasting high-definition imagery.

The starting price will be \$699 with a "rich configuration" to be sold for \$1,100.

"It competes quite nicely against an Apple (computer)," Dominici said while showing a 91Z to AFP.

"The business employee is really starting to drive the decision around what they are going to have on their desktop or what notebook they are going to carry, whereas IT managers used to rule the roost," he added.

The [Lenovo](#) team was mum about any plans to field a tablet computer in a market dominated by Apple's coveted iPads. Butler said his company was tuned into the trend of tablets being woven into home and work life.

"The tablet is absolutely going to be part of the experience and the market," Butler said.

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