

Gartner cuts 2011 global PC growth forecast

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Desktop computers are stocked on a shelf at a Best Buy store. Technology research company Gartner lowered its forecast Wednesday for worldwide personal computer growth amid a sharp drop in sales of mini-notebooks and rising interest in tablets such as Apple's iPad.

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Gartner said PC shipments were expected to grow 9.3 percent this year, reaching 385 million units. Gartner had previously forecast PC unit growth of 10.5 percent for 2011.

"Consumer mobile PCs are no longer driving growth, because of sharply declining consumer interest in mini-notebooks," [Gartner research](#) director Ranjit Atwal said in a statement.

"[Mini-notebook](#) shipments have noticeably contracted over the last several quarters, and this has substantially reduced overall mobile PC unit growth," Atwal said.

"Media tablets, such as the [iPad](#), have also impacted mobile growth, but more because they have caused consumers to delay new mobile PC purchases rather than directly replacing aging mobile PCs with media tablets," he said. "We believe direct substitution of media tablets for mobile PCs will be minimal."

Gartner said it expected businesses to drive PC growth rather than consumers, who were "maintaining a tight rein on their spending in response to continuing [economic uncertainty](#)."

"Businesses sharply reduced replacements and extended PC lifetimes in response to the recession," said Raphael Vasquez, research analyst at Gartner. "Businesses have begun replacing aging PCs more vigorously."

Gartner also said the March earthquake and tsunami in Japan had only a minor impact on worldwide PC shipment growth.

"PC vendors have so far managed the threat of Japanese component disruptions," added George Shiffler, research director at Gartner.

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