

PC market grows in 3Q, but sluggishly, firms say

October 13 2011, By JORDAN ROBERTSON , AP Technology Writer

Personal computer shipments continued to grow in the third quarter but at a sluggish pace, intensifying concerns about the industry's dimming prospects going into the all-important holiday shopping season.

New numbers reported Wednesday by market research firms IDC and [Gartner Inc.](#) are likely to dampen expectations for upcoming [quarterly results](#) from PC makers and their suppliers.

The biggest maker of PC processors, [Intel Corp.](#), is scheduled to report its third-quarter numbers on Tuesday.

The prospects already weren't bright.

PC sales have been in a prolonged funk as anemic demand and rival technologies such as tablets and smartphones have dragged down demand in the U.S. and Europe. Growth in Asian economies isn't enough to offset sluggishness elsewhere.

A notable dynamic of the third quarter was that Hewlett-Packard Co. increased its PC shipments faster than the industry average. That's despite that company's attempts to sell or spin off its [PC business](#), which many analysts said has irreparably damaged the brand. IDC and Gartner both reported market share gains for H-P.

H-P retained its spot as the world's No. 1 PC seller. But the No. 2 spot was up for grabs. Lenovo Group, which is based in China, overtook [Dell](#)

[Inc.](#) and claimed the No. 2 spot for the first time, IDC and Gartner reported.

Gartner reported that worldwide PC shipments were 91.8 million units in the quarter, a 3.2 percent increase over last year, and slightly lower than its earlier projection for 5.1 percent. Western Europe in particular was weak.

IDC said that PC shipments increased to 91.9 million, a 3.6 percent increase over last year, but lower than the firm's expectations for 4.5 percent growth.

Gartner and IDC use slightly different measurements. The numbers are aggregated from many places, typically including shipments to distributors, making them imprecise measurements but valuable for gauging the overall direction of the markets.

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