

# PC shipments to improve in 2012, but still modest

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(AP) -- Worldwide shipments of personal computers will pick up in the second half of the year with the debut of a new Windows operating system and the broader availability of notebooks that are thin like tablet computers, according to the research group IDC.

IDC expects growth in PC shipments this year to be a modest 5 percent. In healthier times, PC shipments had double-digit percentage growth. IDC's forecast Tuesday is in line with other recent estimates.

The research group said PC shipments worldwide grew less than 2 percent last year. The growth came from emerging markets, while the industry saw a 9 percent drop in mature markets such as the U.S. and Western Europe. A weak economy and consumer interest in tablets were to blame.

IDC vice president Bob O'Donnell said consumers continue to hold off buying PCs as Apple Inc.'s iPad and other tablet computers "are proving to be a powerful distraction." It'll take new products - Microsoft Corp.'s Windows 8 and so-called ultrabooks from PC makers - to change that.

IDC also expects 2013 to be challenging for Microsoft and traditional PC makers, which include [Dell Inc.](#), Hewlett-Packard Co., [Sony Corp.](#) and [Lenovo Group Ltd.](#)

"Windows 8 and ultrabooks are a definitive step in the right direction to recapturing the relevance of the PC," Jay Chou, a senior research analyst

at IDC, said in a statement. "But its promise of meshing a tablet experience in a PC body will likely entail a period of trial and error. Thus the market will likely see modest growth in the near term."

IDC is also lowering its forecast in some emerging markets, in part because of shortages of disk drives following heavy flooding near [manufacturing plants](#) in Thailand last year.

Another research group, Gartner, also has forecast a relatively weak 2012.

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