

Lenovo unveils new ultrabooks

June 5 2012, By David Ranii



Lenovo is betting that the colorful, more affordable ultrabooks that it unveiled Monday will help it maintain its momentum and continue to snap up market share.

The No. 2 PC maker is supporting its new IdeaPad U310 and U410 ultrabooks - svelte, ultra-light [notebook PCs](#) - with one of its largest [marketing campaigns](#) ever. It also will be its first campaign to deliver a consistent message across all of its major markets around the globe.

Lenovo's U310 and U410, which are available now, are aimed at consumers and carry a suggested retail price of \$749 and \$799,

respectively. They are among a second generation of ultrabooks being released by PC makers that are considerably less pricey than the initial models introduced last fall that typically exceeded \$1,000.

Technology analyst Roger Kay of Endpoint Technologies Associates was impressed by the new ultrabooks.

"They represent a good, solid offering in the ultrabook market," Kay said. "With starting prices like that, they are quite attractive."

Kay is among those who think that the ultrabook market is about to take off as consumers have become disenchanted with "low price, low-performance" netbooks. Consumers are willing to pay up somewhat for a product that delivers a better [user experience](#), he said.

"These are full notebooks," Kay said. "These do everything that actual notebooks do."

Lenovo has been the fastest-growing major PC maker for 10 straight quarters and is starting to close in on leader Hewlett-Packard. The company is based in China but has an executive headquarters in Morrisville, N.C., that employs about 1,800 workers.

Peter Hortensius, who as president of the product group heads Lenovo's global [PC business](#), said consumers are gravitating to thinner, lighter portables that "feel like they're always on and always connected."

Taking a page from tablet devices - a market dominated by Apple - both Lenovo's new ultrabooks boot up ultra-fast and update email and instant and social media messages even when they're in sleep mode.

"You flip open the lid of your ultrabook, and you're ready to work," said Nick Reynolds, who is in charge of worldwide consumer product

launches at Lenovo.

Hortensius expects the ultrabook market to grow from 1 percent of the total PC market today to 20 percent or so within a year. Consequently, [Lenovo](#) is gearing up to release other ultrabooks aimed at the corporate and small business markets, including the ThinkPad X1 Carbon that it boasts will be the thinnest and lightest ultrabook with a 14-inch screen when it hits the [market](#) this summer.

Indeed, Lenovo's competitors, including Hewlett-Packard and Dell, are also gearing up for a new wave of ultrabooks this year, with each seeking to outdo the other on price and features. Intel said in April that more than 75 ultrabooks are in development and that starting prices should reach \$699 when the back-to-school shopping season kicks in, according to industry publication PC World.

The ultrabook category was created and defined by chip-maker Intel to compete with Apple's phenomenally successful MacBook Air, said Rob Enderle, a technology analyst with the Enderle Group.

The U310 has a 13.3-inch screen and weighs 3.74 pounds. The 14-inch U410 weighs 4.18 pounds. Battery life is as long as seven hours and nine hours, respectively, thanks to solid-state drives that are more efficient - and faster - than traditional hard drives. The devices come in five colors, including "cherry blossom pink" and "sapphire blue."

Lenovo's multimillion-global marketing campaign, which debuts later this month, highlights the ultrabooks' book-like profiles. A 90-second commercial that will be shown in theaters shows one being slipped in and out of a library shelf.

"We call it the journal design," Hortensius said. "It looks like a book, and we are picking up on that quite heavily in our promotion. We think,

frankly, it gives us a unique look and feel in the marketing."

The campaign, created by New York ad agency Saatchi & Saatchi, hails the ultrabooks as "The Book of Do." It's a variation on the company's "For Those Who Do" campaign that plays up the utility of the ultrabooks.

More information: news.lenovo.com/article_display.cfm?article_id=1600

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