

Lenovo unveils lighter, quicker ThinkPad laptop

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Lenovo executives hold the new ThinkPad X1 Carbon laptops in Beijing Monday, Aug. 6, 2012. The Chinese computer maker unveiled the lighter, quicker ThinkPad notebook computer inspired by the convenience of tablets and smart phones. (AP Photo/Alexander F. Yuan)

Lenovo unveiled a lighter, quicker ThinkPad notebook computer on Monday to appeal to customers who like the convenience of tablets and smartphones.

The ThinkPad X1 Carbon will go on sale later this month, the Chinese computer maker said.

Lenovo Group acquired the ThinkPad brand with IBM Corp.'s personal computer unit in 2005. Lenovo passed Dell Inc. last year to become the second-largest PC manufacturer after Hewlett-Packard Co.

The latest ThinkPad has third-generation wireless connectivity and other features inspired by tablets and smartphones, said Dilip Bhatia, vice president of the ThinkPad business unit. He said that was in response to demands by customers who want a tablet's convenience but need a notebook's wider range of functions.

"They want faster. They want thinner," Bhatia said.



Lenovo Vice President Dilip Bhatia holds a new ThinkPad X1 Carbon laptop in Beijing Monday, Aug. 6, 2012. The Chinese computer maker unveiled the lighter, quicker ThinkPad notebook computer inspired by the convenience of tablets and smart phones. (AP Photo/Alexander F. Yuan)

Lenovo shaved the 14-inch (35.5 centimeter) laptop computer's weight to three pounds (1.3 kilograms) from the 3.7 pounds (1.7 kilograms) of last year's model, Bhatia. He said it would have up to eight hours of battery life and the startup time was reduced by as much as half to under 20 seconds.

The ThinkPad unit launched the first tablet version of its computer last

year.

Despite tablets' growing popularity, Bhatia said there will still be strong demand for notebooks to perform more complex functions in business, education and government. Forecasts call for global notebook sales to reach 230 million this year, versus 110 million for tablets.

"The clamshell format is going to be around for a long time," Bhatia said. "We see a multi-device environment."

Lenovo took the unusual step of unveiling the new computer in China because of the fast growth of its market and the local popularity of ThinkPads, said Bhatia.

The computer's chief developer, Arimasa Naitoh, vice president of ThinkPad research and development, said he has met a Chinese collector who owns 100 ThinkPads.

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