

Global tablet sales freeze up, survey shows

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A Microsoft Surface Pro 2 tablet at a store on October 22, 2013 in Miami, Florida

The global market for tablet computers went into hibernation in early 2014, ending a long run of sizzling growth, a survey showed Thursday.

The IDC report said sales of tablets including newly introduced convertible PCs totaled 50.4 million units in the first quarter of 2014.

That was just 3.9 percent higher than the same period a year earlier, and

down 35.7 percent from the busy holiday season that included the fourth quarter of 2013.

IDC said that the market is suffering from saturation, and that many people are using large-screen smartphones or "phablets" instead of tablets. The introduction of new "2-in-1" devices such as the Microsoft surface, which aims to serve as a PC and a tablet, failed to gain traction.

"The rise of large-screen phones and consumers who are holding on to their existing tablets for ever longer periods of time were both contributing factors to a weaker-than-anticipated quarter for tablets and 2-in-1s," said Tom Mainelli, an IDC analyst.

"In addition, commercial growth has not been robust enough to offset the slowing of consumer shipments."

Tablet sales have been surging and grew roughly 50 percent in 2013, but that pace appears to be slowing.

IDC said Apple remained the largest tablet vendor with 16.4 million iPads sold in the first quarter. But its market share slid to 32.5 percent from 40.2 percent in early 2013.



A woman looks at an Apple iPad at one of the company's stores in Paris, on December 20, 2013

Samsung captured 22.3 percent of the market with 11.2 million tablets sold. Its [market share](#) has fallen from 32 percent a year ago.

Amazon saw a sharp decline in sales of Kindle Fire [tablets](#)—down 47 percent from a year ago to one million units. That put Amazon in fifth place with a 1.9 percent share, according to IDC.

Taiwan's Asus was the number three seller with a five percent share, and China's Lenovo was fourth at 4.1 percent, IDC found.

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