

Tablet market ended year on weak note

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Research firm IDC reported a 13.7 percent year-over-year drop in worldwide tablet sales in the fourth quarter, with 65.9 million units shipped

The global market for tablet computers ended 2015 with a whimper, as the once sizzling market showed further signs of cooling, a market tracker said Monday.

Research firm IDC reported a 13.7 percent year-over-year drop in

worldwide tablet [sales](#) in the fourth quarter, with 65.9 million units shipped.

For the full year, IDC said the number of tablets shipped fell 10.1 percent from a year earlier to 206.8 million.

Tablet sales had been gaining momentum through 2014 but failed to live up to many forecasts as consumers shifted to slim laptop computers and kept their tablets longer than expected before replacing them.

One bright spot in the tablet market however has been the "detachable" segment with removable keyboards such as the iPad Pro, which is growing at a strong pace, according to IDC.

For 2015, detachable tablets reached an all-time high of 8.1 million units, the report said.

"One of the biggest reasons why detachables are growing so fast is because end users are seeing those devices as PC replacements," said IDC's Jean Philippe Bouchard.

"We believe Apple sold just over two million iPad Pros while Microsoft sold around 1.6 million Surface devices, a majority of which were Surface Pro and not the more affordable Surface 3. With these results, it's clear that price is not the most important feature considered when acquiring a detachable—performance is."

Jitesh Ubrani, an IDC analyst, said the Apple's iPad Pro "was the clear winner this season as it was the top selling detachable, surpassing notable entries from Microsoft and other PC vendors."

But Ubrani said Google's new detachable tablet had a "lackluster" reception and noted that its Android platform "will require a lot more

refinement to achieve any measurable success."

Apple kept its position at the top of the overall [tablet market](#) with fourth quarter sales of 16.1 million units, a market share of 24.5 percent despite a drop in unit sales of nearly 25 percent.

Amazon on Fire

Samsung was second with nine million units and a 13.7 percent share, while Amazon took third place sales of 5.2 million and a 7.9 percent share.

While Amazon has not publicly released sales data for its Fire and Kindle devices, IDC said it appeared to gain traction with its bargain tablets priced as low as \$50.

According to IDC, Amazon [tablet](#) sales surged 175.7 percent in the past quarter, but said its success "has thus far been purely based on price," adding that "while this bodes well during the holiday season, it's unlikely the Kindle's success will continue in the remainder of the year."

China's Lenovo and Huawei were fourth and fifth in sales with [market](#) shares of 4.8 and 3.4 percent, respectively.

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