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Gartner Says Worldwide Media Tablets Sales to Reach 119 Million Units in 2012

Enterprise Sales of Media Tablets Will Account for Approximately 35 Per Cent of Sales in 2015

STAMFORD, Conn., April 10, 2012 — Worldwide media tablet sales to end users are forecast to total 118.9 million units in 2012, a 98 per cent increase from 2011 sales of 60 million units, according to Gartner, Inc.

Apple's iOS continues to be the dominant media tablet operating system (OS), as it is projected to account for 61.4 per cent of worldwide media tablet sales to end users in 2012 (see Table 1). Despite the arrival of Microsoft-based devices to this market, and the expected international rollout of the Kindle Fire, Apple will continue to be the market leader through the forecast period.

"Despite PC vendors and phone manufacturers wanting a piece of the pie and launching themselves into the media tablet market, so far, we have seen very limited success outside of Apple with its iPad," said Carolina Milanesi, research vice president at Gartner. "As vendors struggled to compete on price and differentiate enough on either the hardware or ecosystem, inventories were built and only 60 million units actually reached the hands of consumers across the world. The situation has not improved in early 2012, when the arrival of the new iPad has reset the benchmark for the product to beat."

"It appears that this year competitors have waited to see what Apple would bring out — because there were very few announcements of new media tablets at either the Consumer Electronics Show or Mobile World Congress. Many vendors will wait for Windows 8 to be ready and will try to enter the market with a dual-platform approach, hoping that the Microsoft brand could help them in both the business and consumer markets."

Table 1
Worldwide Sales of Media Tablets to End Users by OS (Thousands of Units)

OS	2011	2012	2013	2016
iOS	39,998	72,988	99,553	169,652
Android	17,292	37,878	61,684	137,657
Microsoft	0	4,863	14,547	43,648
QNX	807	2,643	6,036	17,836
Other Operating Systems	1,919	510	637	464
Total Market	60,017	118,883	182,457	369,258

Source: Gartner (April 2012)

Microsoft tablets are projected to account for 4.1 per cent of media tablet sales this year, and grow to 11.8 per cent of sales by the end of 2016. Windows 8 is Microsoft's official entrance into the media tablet market.

"IT departments will see Windows 8 as the opportunity to deploy tablets on an OS that is familiar to them and with devices offered by many enterprise-class suppliers," Ms Milanese said. "This means that we see Windows 8 as a strong IT-supplied offering more so than an OS with a strong consumer appeal."

Gartner analysts said enterprise sales of media tablets will account for about 35 per cent of total tablet sales sold in 2015. These sales will not be clearly defined as enterprise purchases. Gartner expects organisations to allow tablets as part of their buy your own device (BYOD) programme. More of these tablets will be owned by consumers who use them at work.

"This poses a big threat to vendors that thought about focusing on the enterprise market who will now have to become appealing to consumers as well," Ms Milanese said. "This is exactly the same trend that vendors such as RIM had to face in the smartphone market. The difference here is that tablets have been created for consumers first and then relied on an ecosystem of apps and services that make them more manageable in the organisation. When the deployment will come from the IT department we believe that operating systems such as Windows 8 will have an advantage as long as they are not seen as a compromise in usability for the users."

Android tablets are forecast to account for 31.9 per cent of media tablet sales in 2012. Gartner analysts said the main issue with Android tablets has been the lack of applications that are dedicated to tablets and therefore take advantage of their capabilities. Gartner's consumer survey data shows that consumers are running many of their apps on their mobile phones and their tablets.

Gartner's detailed market forecast data is available in the report, "Forecast: Media Tablets by Operating System, Worldwide, 2010-2016, 1Q12 Update." The report is on Gartner's web site at <http://my.gartner.com/portal/server.pt?open=512&objID=260&mode=2&PageID=3460702&resId=1952715&ref=QuickSearch&stkw=milanesi>.

Gartner's Special Report, "iPad and Beyond: The Future of the Tablet Market," provides insight into what consumers, enterprises and vendors can expect as the market continues to unfold. More than 20 reports examine the tablet marketplace, as well as video commentary. The Special Report is available at <http://www.gartner.com/technology/research/ipad-media-tablet/future-of-tablet-market.jsp>.

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