

Gartner: Flat Device Shipments for 2019

Written by Frederick Douglas
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According to Gartner, global device shipments-- bringing together PCs, tablets and mobile phones-- are to total 2.21 billion in 2019 with essentially flat growth over 2018, as PCs remain on a downward trend while mobile phones are set to return to growth in 2020.

"For the eighth consecutive year, the PC market is at a standstill," the analyst says. "PC shipments will total 258 million units in 2019, a -0.6% decline from 2018. Traditional PCs are set to decline -3% in 2019 to total 189m units."

Table 1

Worldwide Device Shipments by Device Type, 2018-2021 (Millions of Units)

Device Type	2018	2019	2020	2021
Traditional PCs (Desk-Based and Notebook)	195,317	189,472	182,823	175,058
Ultramobiles (Premium)	64,471	68,869	74,432	79,871
Total PC Market	259,787	258,341	257,255	254,929
Ultramobiles (Basic and Utility)	149,561	147,963	145,811	143,707
Computing Device Market	409,348	406,304	403,066	398,636
Mobile Phones	1,811,922	1,802,394	1,824,628	1,798,356
Total Device Market	2,221,270	2,208,697	2,227,694	2,196,992

Source: Gartner (April 2019)

Consumers are increasingly retiring PCs but not purchasing replacements, leading to shipments dropping by another 2.5m units in 2019. On the business side, Windows 10 migration continues into the next phase as Windows 7 support is scheduled to end in January 2020. As a result, Gartner predicts Windows 10 will make 75% of the professional PC market by 2021.

Mobile phone shipments are to total 1.8bn in 2019-- a -0.5% decline brought about by users not

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upgrading their devices unless the replacement offers "significant new utility, efficiency or experiences." Thus, it should come to no surprise the high-end mobile phone market will decline in mature markets during 2019.

The market should see a return to growth in 2020, with shipments growing by 1.2%, but vendors need to realise consumers are extending the lifetime of their phones. One possible high-end phone booster is foldable devices, but Gartner suggests initial trade-offs mean one should take short-term uptake numbers with a grain of salt. The analyst predicts foldables will account for 5% of high-end phones (or around 30m units) by 2023, with the form factor finding a niche as something of a pricey novelty.

In the short term, Gartner expects vendors to experiment more with the foldable form factor as they aim to understand optimal usability patterns and user preferences. After all, usability should be at the core of product development, ensuring a continuous and seamless user experience across all foldable screens.

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