

IDC: Hybrids Lead Declining Tablet Market

Written by Marco Attard
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IDC reports the global tablet market remains on a slump-- Q3 2016 shipments total 43 million, a -14.7% Y-o-Y decline, even if the market does see a Q-o-Q increase of 9.8% as larger vendors preparing for the holiday quarter.

In the meantime low-cost (sub-\$200) hybrid tablets shipments see an all-time high, the result of vendors such as RCA flooding the market. However such devices deliver a low-cost experience, and can prove detrimental to the market in the long run as customers can consider such devices as disposable, rather than potential PC replacements.

Top Five Tablet Vendors, Shipments, Market Share, and Growth, Third Quarter 2016					
(Preliminary Results, Shipments in millions)					
Vendor	3Q16 Unit Shipments	3Q16 Market Share	3Q15 Unit Shipments	3Q15 Market Share	Year-Over-Year Growth
1. Apple	9.3	21.5%	9.9	19.6%	-6.2%
2. Samsung	6.5	15.1%	8.1	16.0%	-19.3%
3. Amazon.com	3.1	7.3%	0.8	1.5%	319.9%
4. Lenovo	2.7	6.3%	3.1	6.0%	-10.8%
5. Huawei	2.4	5.6%	1.9	3.7%	28.4%
Others	19.0	44.2%	26.9	53.2%	-29.2%
Total	43.0	100.0%	50.5	100.0%	-14.7%
Source: IDC Worldwide Quarterly Tablet Tracker, October 31, 2016					

"Beyond the different end-user experience delivered by low- and high-end tablets, we're witnessing real tectonic movements in the market with slate companion devices sold at the low-end serving a broader platform strategy, like Amazon is doing with Alexa on its Fire Tablets, and more expensive productivity tools closer to true computing and legitimate notebook replacement devices that should manage to keep average prices up," the analyst adds.

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In the vendor rankings, Apple remains on top even as it sees shipments drop by -6.2% Y-o-Y to 9.3m units. The iPad Air and Mini remain the most popular iPads, taking over 60% of Apple tablet share, and revenues are essentially flat thanks to the iPad Pro offering. Meanwhile Samsung retains 2nd place, as overreliance on a declining tablet market lead to -19.3% Y-o-Y tablet declines and the hybrid TabPro S took a backseat since its early 2016 launch.

Amazon comes 3rd thanks to the early July Prime Day sale leading to a "huge surge" of Fire tablet shipments. The low-cost tablet remained popular throughout Q3 2016, and the upcoming Fire HD 8 should perform well during the holiday quarter. In 4th place is Lenovo, who despite having a stronghold in EMEA sees shipments dropping by -10.8% Y-o-Y.

The last vendor is Huawei, whose smartphone presence and overall brand recognition has cascaded to tablets, with a strong value offering complete with integrated cellular connectivity at relatively low price points.

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