

Tiny Tablets Get A Leg Up

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Worldwide shipments of 7-inch tablets to double this year

The standard-sized tablet isn't the newest device on the block anymore—it's got a kid brother with a smaller screen, and the younger sibling is expected to grow up fast now that Apple has rolled out its version of a 7-inch tablet as well.

IHS iSuppli estimates 17 million 7-inch tablets shipped last year and projects that this year's total shipments will reach 34 million worldwide. By 2013 that number will nearly double.

The smaller tablets are also expected to account for an increasing share of all tablet shipments, rising from 24% in 2011 to 28% this year and 33% by 2013.

eMarketer estimates that 22% of the total US population will use a tablet at least monthly this year, more than double the percentage with access to such a device in 2011. The iPad accounts for the lion's share of all tablets in the country, and though it will lose market share in the coming years it will continue to be the most popular tablet by a large margin.

Worldwide, IHS iSuppli expects a similar pattern to develop in the 7-inch tablet market.

“The battle in the 7-inch space is highly spirited, with most of the other leading vendors already offering price-competitive products in this size range,” Rhoda Alexander, director of tablet and monitor research for IHS said in a statement. “IHS predicts Apple will successfully position the smaller iPad as a device that will be attractive and easy to adopt for both new and returning customers. This will spur rapid sales growth and provide tough competition for other companies contending in this size range.”

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