

Global Tablet Shipments Fell Double Digits for the First Time in 2015 with Decline Reaching 12.2% YoY, Says TrendForce

2016-01-27 [Anita Wang](#)

Decline in annual tablet shipments reached double digits for the first time on record in 2015, according to [TrendForce](#). The global market research firm's latest tablet shipment report shows a total of 168.5 million units of tablets were shipped last year, representing a 12.2% drop from 2014. The gradual contraction of the global tablet market has become a more pronounced trend.

"The saturation of the tablet market, the long life cycles of tablets themselves and the abundance of substitute devices were major factors that contributed to the large shipment decline," said Anita Wang, notebook analyst for TrendForce. "Tablets were challenged by many large and small devices during 2015, from smartphones sized 5 inches and above to 2-in-1 PCs. Their demand diminished as a result."

Apple's market share fell under 30% for the first time whereas Samsung hanged on to its share by releasing tablets with OLED displays

Apple retained its title of top tablet brand worldwide in 2015, but iPad shipments fell by as much as 22% year on year, from 63.4 million units in 2014 to 49.6 million in 2015. The decline in Apple's annual tablet shipments exceeded the market average, and the brand likewise saw its worldwide market share shrank from 33% in 2014 to 29.4% in 2015. Wang noted that Apple's lead in tablet shipments meant that the brand got hit the hardest by the impacts of the slowing global economy and the weak tablet demand. The increasing competition from rival brands also made it very difficult for Apple to hold on to its market share.

The release of iPad Pro in the final quarter of 2015 only made limited contribution to Apple's shipments because the device fell under the high-end segment in terms of specs and price range. The shipments of iPad mini product line last year are projected to reach 20 million units, accounting for an estimated 41% of Apple's overall tablet shipments. Currently, there is no indication that Apple is prepared to launch the next generation of iPad mini products. Based on TrendForce's analysis, Apple's total shipments for 2016 would drop to under 40 million units if the company decided not to release new models of iPad mini this year and continued with selling the existing models of the series.

Samsung was again the No. 2 tablet brand worldwide in 2015. While the South Korean company saw its tablet shipments fell 18% annually to 33.5 million units, its market share fell by just 1.5% over the year to 19.9%. Product strategy played a large part in Samsung's ability to keep its portion of the tablet market. Major changes were made to the product lines, including adjustments in specs and sizes. Furthermore, Samsung used its advantage in manufacturing small-size OLED panels and released several new tablets featuring this display technology.

Lenovo done well in Europe, its largest tablet market, even though the region's consumer demand was severely weakened by exchange rate fluctuations and currency depreciation. With a diverse range of product lines, Lenovo expanded its presence in Europe against the market headwinds and remained as the No. 3 tablet vendor worldwide in 2015. Its market share also grew slightly to 5.8%.

Amazon ignited its tablet sales in the fourth quarter of 2015 with the new 7-inch Fire tablet. Due to its sweet low price of US\$49.99 and the tempting "buy five and get the sixth free" promotion, Amazon Fire took off in sales upon its release and supplied over 3.5 million units to the vendor's fourth-quarter shipments. The success of this product also helped Amazon to closely edge out ASUS to become the No. 4 brand in the 2015 shipment ranking.

ASUS's tablet strategy for 2015 put profitability over market share, so the vendor posted a massive shipment drop of 34% year on year and fell down a spot in the ranking to No. 5.

Microsoft deserved a mention despite not making the top five for 2015. The vendor continued to deliver stellar shipment results throughout the year as its latest 12.3-inch Surface Pro 4, along with older Surface models, has been enjoying brisk sales. With the help of the Surface series, Microsoft managed to grow its tablet shipments by almost 50% annually in a difficult market and pioneer the popularity of 2-in-1 PCs.

Table: Top Five Tablet Brands Worldwide by Shipments, 2014~2016

Ranking	Brand	2014	Brand	2015	Brand	2016(E)
1	Apple	33.0%	Apple	29.4%	Apple	25.0%
2	Samsung	21.4%	Samsung	19.9%	Samsung	20.0%
3	Lenovo	5.6%	Lenovo	5.8%	Lenovo	5.7%
4	ASUS	4.2%	Amazon	3.3%	Amazon	3.5%
5	Amazon	2.0%	ASUS	3.2%	ASUS	3.3%
	Others	33.9%	Others	38.5%	Others	42.5%
Shipment Total (in million units)		192.0		168.5		151.8

Note: A tablet PC is defined as a slate-form device featuring a 7-inch screen with a display resolution of 1024 x 600 pixels or higher. This category excludes 2-in-1 PCs.

Source: TrendForce, Jan., 2016

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Media Contact

Pinchun Chou +886-2-8978-6488 ext.669 PinchunChou@TrendForce.com

Lindsay Hou +886-2-8978-6488 ext.667 Lindsayhou@TrendForce.com

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