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European tablet sales manage to beat laptops for the first time in Q4 2013 according to Context, with sales reaching a record high of 4.5 million units to account for 57% of the combined notebook, netbook and tablet segment.



However the device segment sees plummeting growth despite such sales numbers-- growth from Q1 2013 to Q4 2014 is down from 204.5% to 39.1% due to such devices becoming increasingly commoditised.

Android leads as OS of choice, taking over 69.8% European market share with 82.2% growth. Budget 7-inch Android devices are the most popular, with Q4 2013 sales growing by 100% Y-o-Y to 1.59m units. Larger 10.1-inch (38.7% growth) and 8-inch (578% growth) tablets are also popular.

On the other hand the iPad has 28.9% share as it grows by just 2.7%. Surface Q4 2013 share remains flat at 0.9%, even if might see slow growth in the future through growing interest from the enterprise segment.

"Although tablets are expected to move into commercial environments too, this is expected to happen slowly and would for the time being represent an addition to, rather than a replacement of, the traditional clamshell systems," the analyst adds. "Also, recent efforts by vendors to provide ultraportable solutions such as thin and light clamshell laptops and hybrid solutions will also increasingly find their way into the commercial space and successfully compete with tablets."

On a geographic basis the UK is the largest European market in Q4, with sales reaching around

1.5m units. Germany follows at 950000.

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