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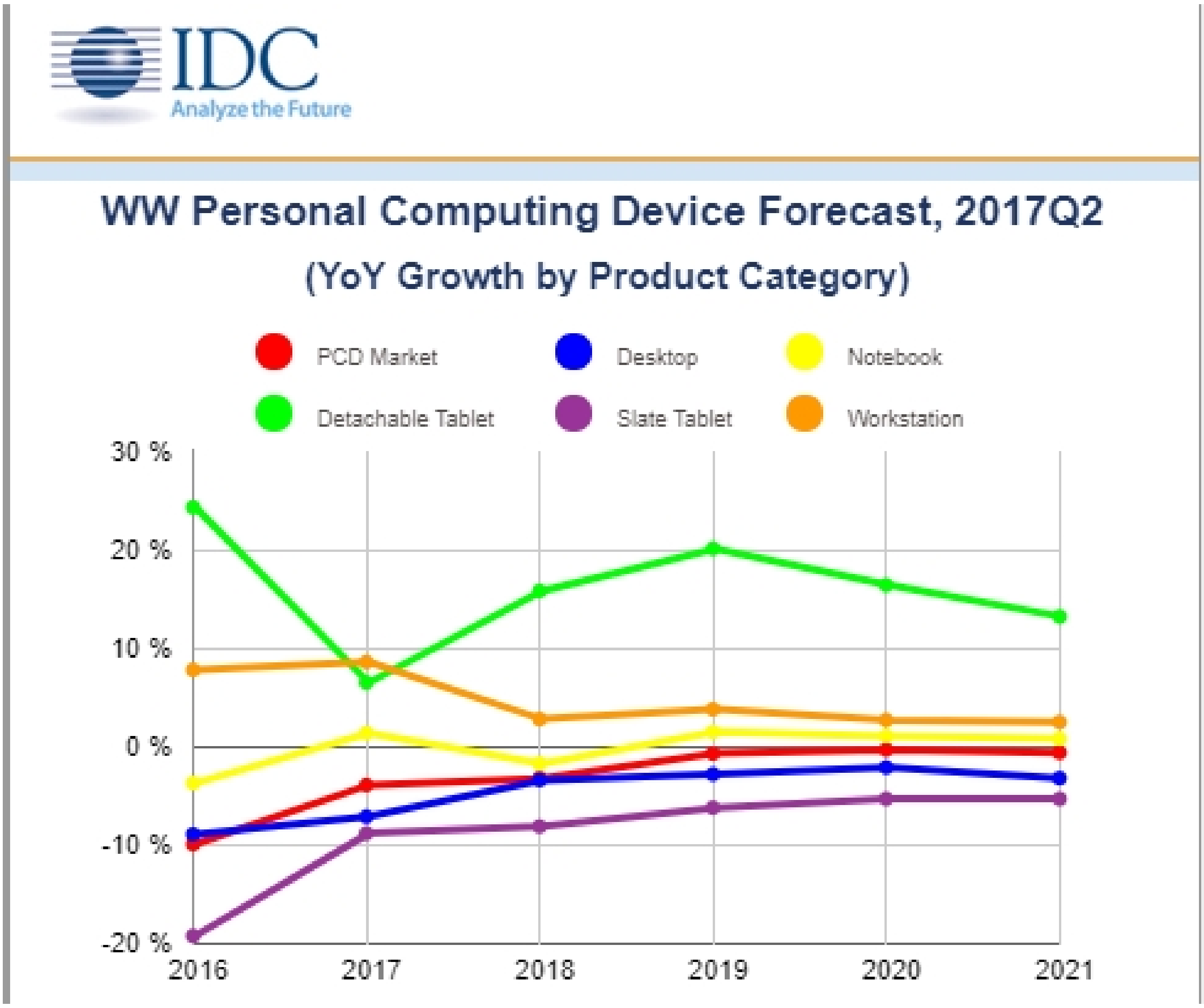
According to IDC the global personal computing device (PCD) is set to remain in "slight" decline through 2021, with shipments falling from 435.1 million units in 2016 to 398.3m in 2021, making a CAGR of -1.7% for the 5-year period.

The analyst defines "personal computing devices" as traditional PCs (combining desktops, notebooks and workstations) and tablets (slates and detachables).



While the PCD market will not see growth throughout the forecast period, it should see some interesting trends-- notebook PCs show "small but steady" Y-o-Y growth in all years but 2018, and hybrid devices are the fastest growing PCD segment with a 5-year CAGR of over 14%. Ultraslim notebooks should also grow quickly with a CAGR of 18% through 2021, and the commercial segment will be a "relative bright spot" reaching stability in 2017 before growth in 2019 and beyond.

"Looking at the PCD market collectively can be challenging because of all the different product category trends that are unfolding," IDC says. "When looking at tablets we continue to expect that category to decline as the appeal of slate devices diminishes and life cycles for these devices look more like those of PCs 4-5 years ago. Detachable tablets will continue to grow, but we've reduced the short-term forecast on the assumption that OEMs are making a slower transition from notebook PCs to detachables than previously expected. The good news for this space is that both consumers and commercial buyers are opening up to Windows 10, and we are already at a point where Windows detachables represents more than 50% of shipments in the category. This should continue throughout the forecast."

In the meantime, the traditional PC market continues to transition to slim and convertible designs, even as both commercial and consumer customers continue to stretch the life of older PCs. This constrains spending and spreads usage across a portfolio of devices. However, shipments could pick up if accelerators such as economic conditions, gaming, VR and Windows 10 speed up-- but even the best case scenarios predict "limited" overall growth.

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