

As 2017 comes to a close it is as good a time as any to take a look back at the times that have been, be it through the goings on of the PC market or what retailers have been up to...

- **EMEA PC Market Shows "Signs of Strength":** The news surrounding the PC market hasn't been wholly bad in 2017, as EME A shipments were "almost" flat. According to IDC Q3 2017 shipments were down by just -0.5% Y-o-Y, with showings of "clear signs of strength" particularly in notebooks and the enterprise segment.

- **Media Markt Opens Concept Store**: Media Markt plans to create a longer and more pleasant shopping experience, as seen in a new store concept in Wilrijk and Eindhoven, adding a snack bar, coffee bar complete with barista and even a beauty salon. Do comfy stores encourage more spending, we wonder?

- **The Switch in Nintendo's Fortunes:** Nintendo turned a few heads with the reveal of the Switch , a curious tablet-console hybrid with detachable controllers. Many thought such a device would bring middling results for the venerable Japanese company but, 9 months after the March 2017 launch, the console is still going strong with sales reaching 10 million.

- **Apple Presents iMac Pro:** WWDC 2017 had Apple presents a first iMac Pro in a while -- a workstation-grade machine aimed at demanding workflows such as video and graphics rendering, VR content creation and 3D rendering. The chassis is identical to that of the latest iMacs, only in an admittedly cooler shade of space gray.

- **Mining Drives Graphics:** A want for better game graphics is not the only driver of the GPU market. Customers also want graphics cards for mining , as the recent price increases for cryptocurrency such as Bitcoin (1BTC is currently worth around €13000!) led to "strong" Q2 2017 sales. In turn Nvidia and AMD are selling cards designed for such tasks through thelack of image output.

- **Staples Gets Bought:** Following months of speculation on the fate of the office supply chain, Sycamore Partners emerges a s the buyer of Staples in a deal worth $6.9 billion, the largest acquisition for the private equity firm. The announcement came 13 months after the federal judge dashed the $6.3bn acquisition of Staples by rival Office Depot, over fears the merger would create an office supply monopoly.

- **Microsoft Opens London Store:** September 2017 had Microsoft announce plans to open a first flagship store in Europe -- specifically in Oxford Circus, London just up the road from the recently redesigned Apple flagship store.The location is occupied by United Colours of Benetton and, as one surely knows, sits in an extremely popular shopping area hosting flagship stores for the big likes of Nike and H&M.