According to Gartner global shipments of devices-- specifically PCs, tablets and mobile phones-- total 2.28 billion units in 2017, and are set to reach 2.32bn in 2018, a 2.1% increase.

Two markets drive overall device shipments. First are mobile phones, led by the high-end smartphone segment. Second are premium ultramobiles, with Apple and Microsoft Windows 10 device stimulating higher demand.

Table 1

Worldwide Device Shipments by Device Type, 2016-2019 (Millions of Units)

Device Type	2016	2017	2018	2019
Traditional PCs (Desk-Based and Notebook)	220	204	193	187
Ultramobiles (Premium)	50	59	70	80
Total PC Market	270	262	264	267
Ultramobiles (Basic and Utility)	169	160	159	156
Computing Device Market	439	423	423	423
Mobile Phones	1,893	1,855	1,903	1,924
Total Device Market	2,332	2,278	2,326	2,347

Source: Gartner (January 2018)

"Consumers have many technologies to choose from, which poses two main challenges for

vendors. The first is to compete for wallet share, given how many devices consumers own. The second is to deliver value and maintain relevance-- to offer the right device to the right audience," the analyst says. "We will see more buyers focusing on value, rather than just price, and therefore considering higher-priced devices."

Perhaps unsurprisingly, the traditional PC market remains in decline in 2018 (by -5.4% in 2018), with notebooks showing the steepest drop (-6.8%). Premium ultramobiles are the only PC category showing growth, bringing overall 2018 PC shipments to flat results. The year sees PCs affected by DRAM costs, which have doubled since June 2016. This lead to the first PC price increase since H1 2017, and the trend is likely to continue into 2018 until DRAM costs reverse.

Meanwhile mobile phone shipments are forecast to increase by 2.6% in 2018, with the total amounting to 1.9bn units. Smartphone sales should grow by 6.2% in 2018, making 87% of sale. Gartner expects iPhone sles to grow by more than the market average in 2018, with new model launches fueling stronger replacement cycles.

The smartphones sold this year are to offer more personalised experiences through on-device AI, virtual personal assistants, more natural UIs, biometrics and display and camera enhancements. 2018 will not see 5G phones, since the rollout of such networks is to start in 2019 in select countries (such as the US and S. Korea). Gartner predicts 9% of smartphones sold by 2021 will support 5G, which will be a "significant" driver of video and streaming services, bringing faster uplinks and support for new AI applications.

Go Gartner Forecast Analysis: PCs, Ultramobiles and Mobile Phones, WW, Q4 2017