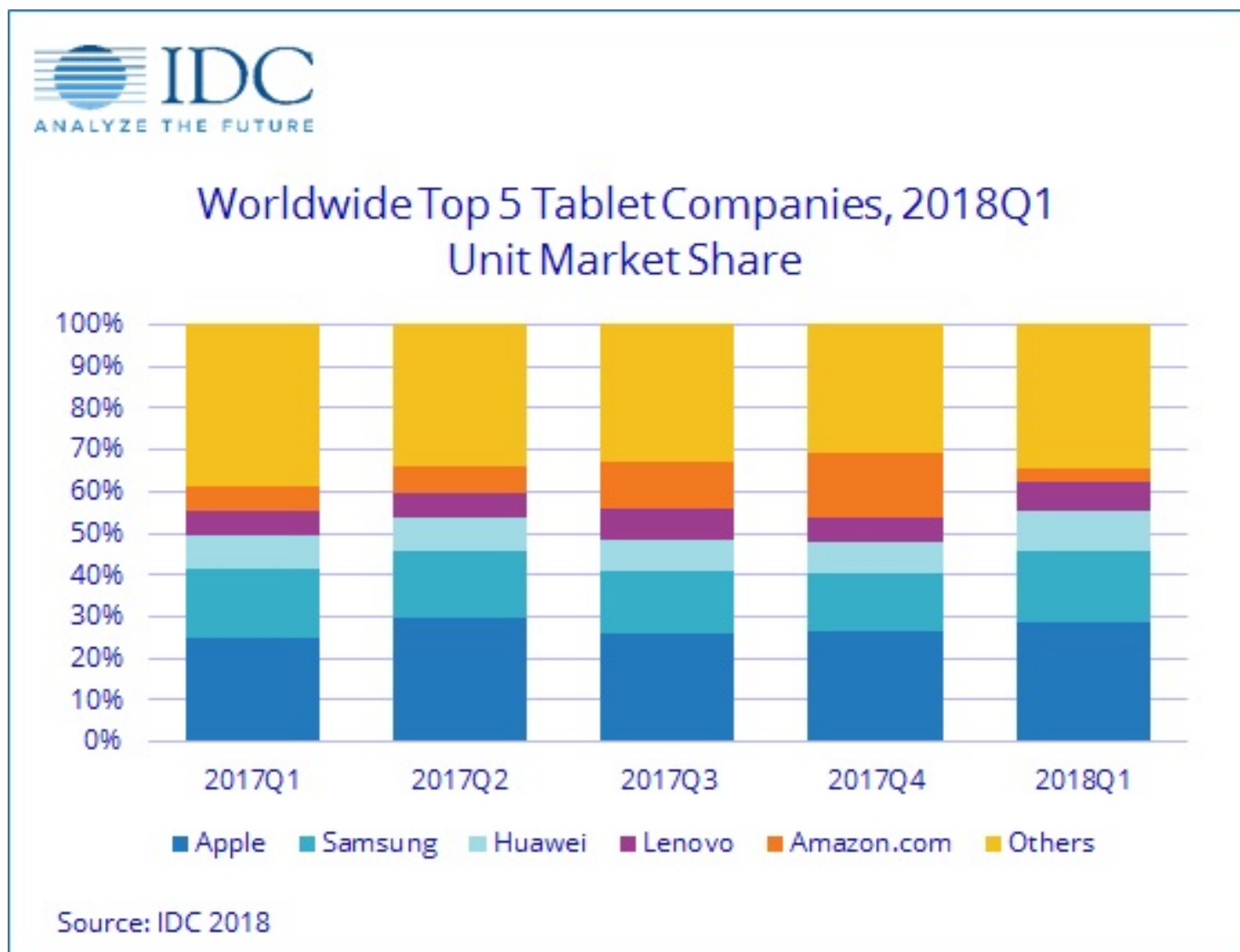


IDC: Third Player Enters Tablet Arena

Written by Marco Attard
03 May 2018

According to IDC, a new entrant brings "welcome change" to an otherwise ailing tablet market-- Chrome OS-powered detachable tablets, bringing a more tightly controlled software option to the growing niche.



The analyst points out detachables as the one bright spot in tablets, since global Q1 2018 shipments of devices such as the Microsoft Surface and iPad Pro are up by 2.9% Y-o-Y, making 15.3% share of the tablet market. In contrast, overall tablet shipments are down by -11.7% Y-o-Y to 31.7 million, while traditional slate shipments total 26.8m in Q1 2018, a -13.9% Y-o-Y decline.

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"The timing of Chrome OS' official entry into the tablet category is apt," IDC says. "Peak education buying season is approaching, and Chrome OS has resonated with administrators for its manageability where deployment is strong. Schools looking for that same environment but in tablet form-- generally students aren't provisioned a device with a keyboard until older-- could find favor with these new devices."

In the vendor rankings, Apple remains firmly in the top spot with iPad shipments reaching 9.1m. Of the amount, 1.8m are iPad Pro models, making Apple the leader in the detachable category. Apple launched the latest iPad around the end of Q1, and a renewed focus on the education market should prove lucrative in the coming quarters.

Samsung remains in 2nd place, even as Q1 2018 shipments are down by -11.4% Y-o-Y. The S. Korean giant is one of the few companies selling premium Android tablets, but the category is currently suffering in the face of detachables based on the Apple, Microsoft and Google Chrome platforms. That said, Samsung does have an ace up its sleeve with the Tab Active 2, a tablet aimed at the niche yet profitable enterprise market.

Huawei shipments are up by 13% Y-o-Y, allowing it to gain 2% of share sequentially and climb up to 3rd place in the vendor rankings. The company sees "tremendous" growth of 72.7% Y-o-Y in Europe, against a backdrop of -8.7% Y-o-Y total market decline. Lenovo follows with 1.8% Y-o-Y growth thanks to detachable device, as well as a strong presence in Asia and Europe.

In 5th place is Amazon-- not a surprise, since the company's tablet shipments are highly seasonal. Q1 2018 had Amazon focus on the Alexa platform, leading to the availability of the virtual assistant on the smaller 7- and 8-inch Fire tablets.

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