

UK IT market gathers pace on the back of resurgent notebook sales

doug_woodburn@vnu.co.uk

Propelled by a surge in notebook and peripherals sales in the final quarter, the UK IT arena grew five per cent to nearly £9bn in 2006 compared with 2005, according to analyst GfK.

Laptop sales leapt 20 per cent to £1.6bn as average price points for consumer models plummeted from £690 to £570 and professional models from £800 to £725.

A 19 per cent plunge in desktop sales meant notebooks increased their share of the total PC market to 70 per cent in the consumer segment and 62 per cent in the business market.

Lower-valued peripherals also performed well, with PC speaker sales romping up 73 per cent growth and storage devices increasing 32 per cent.

Anthony Norman, business group director for IT at GfK, said: "We were

expecting the increase in mobile sales as mobile PC prices dropped in 2006.

"The biggest surprise for us was the market growth in the fourth quarter, especially in notebooks. About 33 per cent of all PCs sold in 2006 were sold in the fourth quarter, compared with 29 per cent in 2005."

Norman attributed the late surge to aggressive promotions from the big retailers and the availability of machines offering a free upgrade to Vista in the run up to Christmas.

However, Dan May, sales director at VAR Ramsac, said: "At the corporate end of the market we have seen the opposite to this trend, with customers switching back to desktops due to the advance of Windows mobile."

"However, we have seen a shift to notebooks in the home side, and I'd put that down to costs coming down."

According to GfK, the corporate notebook market enjoyed more moderate gains in 2006, with Q4 sales increasing 10 per cent in value terms. **CRN**

» Further reading:

www.channelweb.co.uk/2174639

