

NETBOOKS IN BRIEF

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Netbooks are small laptops designed for wireless communication and access to the Internet. They are small in size, cheap, under-powered and run either Linux or Windows operating system.

History. The influx of netbooks began in 2007 when ASUS introduced a new type of a portable computer. Named the EeePC, it was a clamshell sporting 7-inch screen. ASUS dubbed it a 'netbook'.

It was originally designed for developing countries, but ASUS decided to sell it in the U.S. and Europe as well. The gadget took off.

Eee PCs weren't bought by people in poor countries but by middle-class consumers in western Europe and the US, people who wanted a second laptop to carry in a handbag for peeking at web-based services wherever they were.

By fall 2008, nearly every US computermaker (Dell, HP, Lenovo etc) had produced its own netbook.

Popularity. By late 2008, netbooks had begun to take market share away from laptops. It is estimated that almost thirty times more netbooks were sold in 2008 (11.4 million) than those in 2007 (400,000).

The reasons for the popularity of netbooks are its low price, compact size and dead-simple use. When the Eee PC was conceived, making machine uncomplicated was the key driver in its design.

Misunderstanding. Netbooks are under-powered. You cannot replace a laptop by a netbook. But some vendors do not emphasize this fact in their advertising. As a result, some people continue to return netbooks after buying.

Future. In 2009 the sales of the netbooks are expected to jump up to 35 million and then rising to an estimated 139 million in 2013 accordingly.

The netbook is the future of hardware. For a few users who need a high-performance device, PC makers will offer expensive computers, which can do everything and even more. For everyone else - lawyers looking for something to do on the train, women desperate for something that fits in their handbag - netbooks will dominate. People need portable, cheap and small computers.