# PC shipments surge as the world gets serious about working from home

The ongoing coronavirus pandemic has made it more difficult to buy a new laptop recently, and we're now starting to see how PC shipments have been affected. While PC shipments declined sharply during the impact to manufacturing in Q1, both IDC and Gartner report that shipments have now grown in Q2 despite an economic slowdown.

Remote working and schooling is undoubtedly fueling an increase in demand for PCs. Businesses and students have had to adapt to working and learning remotely, and demand for laptops has increased as a result. IDC says PC shipments have increased 11.2 percent year-over year, while Gartner places it at a more modest 2.8 percent.

Gartner does not include Chromebooks in its PC shipments, but IDC includes them in its numbers. It's clear Chromebooks are helping drive overall PC demand. IDC even highlights an "intense Chromebook demand from both consumers and institutions" in Canada, and "record demand from stay-at-home orders" for PCs in general in the US.

PC shipment numbers don't reflect actual sales, though. These are simply shipments to retailers like Best Buy who then sell the laptops to consumers. Sales will likely be higher, as consumers buy up existing inventory. We've seen long delivery times and stock issues for laptops at some retailers in the US, and NPD reported a mid-40 percent year-over-year increase in unit sales of Windows laptops and Chromebooks in May.

Microsoft also reported an increase in demand for PCs during its latest earnings back in April, and a big overall jump in Windows usage. “The PC is back” joked Jared Spataro, head of Microsoft 365, in an interview with *The Verge* at the beginning of the pandemic. “People are recognizing… trying to use an iPad to work from home is not gonna work. That PC form factor is huge and you can see that data in everything from supply chain and what’s happening with devices.”

Microsoft is also adjusting its Windows 10X plans thanks to the pandemic. The 10X operating system variant will now be arriving on traditional single-screen laptop devices first. Microsoft had originally planned to introduce Windows 10X on dual-screen devices, but the pandemic shifted the company’s priorities.

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