Report: Samsung Edges Apple in Chip Demand

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Samsung has become a couch potato, gobbling up more chips than even Apple, according to new research from Gartner.

Samsung and Apple together consumed $45.3 billion of semiconductors in 2012, an increase of $7.9 billion from 2011, to represent 15 percent of total semiconductor demand, while the total semiconductor market decreased by 3 percent overall, according to Garntner's numbers.

Broken out, Samsung accounted for 8 percent of chip purchases globally last year, with its consumption increasing 28.9 percent to $23.9 billion. Apple on the other hand bought $21.4 billion worth of chips, or 7.2 percent share, followed by H-P $14B (4.7 percent).

But 2012 wasn't all roses. Masatsune Yamaji, principal research analyst at Gartner, noted that 6 out of the top 10 OEMs actually reduced their demand in 2012.

"In addition to a weak macroeconomic situation, a dramatic change in consumer demand contributed to a reduction in semiconductor demand in 2012," Yamaji said in a statement, noting that while PC market still represented the largest sector for chip demand, desktops and laptops did not sell well, as consumers moved to smartphones and media tablets.

"This shift caused a substantial decrease in semiconductor demand in 2012, as the semiconductor content of a smartphone or a media tablet is far less than that of a PC," Yamaji said.

In total, the top 10 companies demanded $106.4 billion of semiconductors in 2012, to account for 36 percent of total semiconductor vendors' worldwide revenue of $297.6 billion. Of the top 10 companies, Nokia's semiconductor demand contracted the most.

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