

## IS THE PC DEAD?

Early August 2011 saw the 30th anniversary of the humble Personal Computer. And now an IBM engineer, who worked on its design, says that the desktop PC's days are numbered that's news to you and me...



Writing on IBM's Smarter Planet Blog, Dr Mark Dean says 'when I helped design the PC, I didn't think I'd live long enough to witness its decline'.

Plus, Software-as-a-Service pioneer Duane Jackson agrees, seeing the decline of PCs to be coinciding with the death of CDs and DVDs.

Personally, we think talk of the PC's decline or a post-PC era is much exaggerated as sales of PCs were still rising in the second quarter of this year, albeit by a modest 2.3%, according to analyst Gartner.

Windows 7 is also showing signs of success for Microsoft, with Gartner predicting that 94% of new PCs shipped in 2011 will run it - that's 635 million new PCs running Windows 7.

### **The PC is facing competition**

We are not denying that the traditional desktop PC has competition. The number of Macs shipping has risen, proven that we're much more open to choice than we used to be. And that's something which will give heart to companies who've come late to the party, such as Google and its Chrome OS.

Chrome is part of a trend towards "cloud computing" which, while it hasn't changed the world yet, is set to redefine the traditional PC. Cloud-based computing relies on you accessing services and software from a remote server (essentially a big computer) rather than from your PC's own hard disk.

Other devices are giving the PC a run for its money, too. In the second quarter of 2011 almost 429 million mobile phones were sold; 25% of these being smart-phones and these are basically miniature computers - you can email, take photographs, make movies, run multiple applications, check your social network and more...

### **Tablets aren't the answer**

And who could forget the tablet, epitomised by Apple's iPad. If you believe the hype the iPad is the best thing since the PC, if not sliced bread. Even Mark Dean's primary computer is a tablet.

But can you really replace PCs with a tablet or smart-phone?

For some, the answer is 'no'. The reason being that the primary thing you do with your computer is type. The iPad's onscreen keyboard is one of the best around but it can't compare to the physical QWERTY people are used to.

As well as letting you type documents, there's enough room to store your music collection, and your photographs going back five years. And no-one can dispute that a PC is significantly more powerful than any of the tablet's on the market.

Maybe we are stuck in the past, but we love the PC and we suspect that we are not alone. We think Mark Dean will have to wait quite some time yet before he finally witnesses its demise.

**In a recent survey people were asked:-**

**What do you use as your main computing device?**

Desktop PC (59%, 1,088 Votes)

Laptop/Notebook (28%, 509 Votes)

Mac (10%, 179 Votes)

Tablet (2%, 30 Votes)

Smartphone (1%, 18 Votes)

Netbook (0%, 9 Votes)

Total Voters: **1,832**

Information is from Which? Magazine