China continues to leverage OEM capability to strengthen its position in the robust computer industry. At present, the hub is the largest manufacturing base for the line, representing more than 80 percent of global output.

Tablet PCs, including the iPad and Android-based variants, are mainly subcontracted there. Own-brand models of the second type are also available.

Laptops, however, are still the strongest category in the local sector. In 2011, yield and exports hit 244 million and 230 million units, surging by 32 and 21 percent YoY. The latter will reach 328 million units in 2014, broadening China's worldwide output share to 80 percent from its current 60 percent level.

All-in-one computers continue to be a key type in the domestic desktop segment, reflecting the global trend. Their space-saving configurations are popular with the enterprise sector.

Key findings

1. The majority of interviewed suppliers plan to reduce export prices in coming months to attract orders amid intense competition. For most, the adjustment will not exceed 10 percent, while a few will slash quotes by more than 15 percent.

2. The rest of the respondents are raising rates to remain buoyant in the face of elevated labor and material costs and yuan valuation. A bigger number will go for 11 to 15 percent or higher markups.

3. In spite of outlay challenges, most companies anticipate improved export sales of at least 10 percent this year. Many even expect to surpass 20 percent.

4. Over 80 percent of the global tablet PC output comes from China, with the bulk from OEM enterprises. The last includes local operations and iPad subcontractor Foxconn.

5. Homegrown tablet computer suppliers continue to offer mostly 7in models to avoid competing directly with the iPad. Output of larger versions in 8, 8.9 and 10.1in will climb in the months ahead to match global trends.

6. To strengthen traditional mobile and desktop categories, manufacturers adopt new and faster CPUs and integrate value-added features, all aimed at taking product performance a notch higher. Those in the all-in-one PC category are releasing more touchscreen models.

7. North America and Europe will remain the target destinations, although more suppliers are exploring other markets, including the Asia-Pacific region and the Middle East.

Scope & methodology

This report covers the major products of China's computer industry, namely tablet and desktop PCs, and other mobile computing devices. Graphics and video cards are also covered. For each category, details about the different types offered, their common features and price determinants are provided.

The Industry Overview elaborates on issues affecting production and exports. It also identifies the common strategies manufacturers are employing to boost sales and enhance overall competitiveness.

To reflect the industry structure, the majority of the suppliers featured in this report are local, privately owned enterprises.

The province of Guangdong is the main production center. Reflecting this structure, 88 percent of featured companies are based there.

To produce this report, Global Sources interviewed a wide range of suppliers. Rather than focus simply on high-profile makers, we compiled a representative sample of large, midsize and emerging manufacturers. All profiled companies are export-oriented professional suppliers that are verified by Global Sources.

Each supplier is confirmed to be authentic with a legally registered business. All companies are visited three or more times by Global Sources to ensure they are export-ready and have real offices and products.

The listed contact person has been verified to represent the registered company. In each case, companies were required to answer specific questions designed to verify their manufacturing and export credentials.

All profiled suppliers participated in a survey designed to provide insight into price trends, sales outlook and target markets in the next six to 12 months. All survey questions are single choice. Results were calculated based on the actual number of valid responses to each question.

Global Sources supplier rankings

★★★★★

Suppliers are ranked using a 6-star ranking system. Companies with a higher star ranking provide more business information and verification reports on their Global Sources online homepages.

Suppliers rated 5 or 6 stars have a Credit Check report from First Advantage or Sino-Trust and a Supplier Capability Assessment report provided by Bureau Veritas online.

The rankings are correct at the time of publication and may be subject to change.