Samsung takes top spot in LCD TV market

by Lance Whitney

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Boosted by growing consumer demand for advanced TVs, Samsung carved out a leading share of the U.S. LCD TV market in the first quarter, according to data released Monday by iSuppli.

For the quarter, the South Korean company shipped 1.1 million LCD TVs. Though that number was down 33 percent from the fourth quarter, Samsung still beat out the overall industry, which saw its shipments drop by 35.8 percent. This difference helped Samsung inch its market share up to 18 percent from 17.3 percent in the previous quarter.

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<th>U.S. LCD-TV Market Share in the First Quarter of 2010</th>
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<td>(Ranking by Unit Shipments in Thousands)</td>
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<td>Q1 2010 Rank</td>
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<td>Total</td>
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(Credit: iSuppli)
The overall decline in LCD TV shipments is normal for that quarter, noted iSuppli, as sales typically peak during the fourth-quarter holiday season before falling to the lowest point of the year. Many manufacturers also use the first quarter to clear out stock of older models to pave the way for new ones.

Despite the drop in shipments, the industry saw rising demand for TVs with advanced features, including LED-backlighting, Internet connectivity, and 3D, all trends that Samsung managed to capitalize on.

"The year 2010 marks a major transition period for the U.S. LCD-TV market, when consumers increasingly are gravitating toward sets with more advanced features," Riddhi Patel, iSuppli's principal analyst for television systems, said in a statement. "With Samsung at the forefront of trends including LED backlighting and 3D, the company has been able to outperform the market and its closest competitors."

The introduction of new models with advanced features did boost the average price for an LCD TV to $830, up 7 percent from $774 in the fourth quarter. The increase was notable, according to iSuppli, since prices tend to drop from one quarter to the next.

Tapping into those advanced features, manufacturers are expected to ship between 1.45 million and 1.5 million 3D TVs this year, iSuppli said. Shipments of TVs with LED backlighting are forecast to rise to 7.7 million in 2010, a 600 percent jump from the 1.1 million shipped last year. And U.S. shipments of Internet-enabled TVs are projected to shoot up to 11.8 million units this year, up from 6.9 million in 2009.

Lance Whitney wears a few different technology hats--journalist, Web developer, and software trainer. He's a contributing editor for Microsoft TechNet Magazine and writes for other computer publications and Web sites. You can follow Lance on Twitter at @lancewhit. Lance is a member of the CNET Blog Network, and he is not an employee of CNET.
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