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Semico projects five-fold netbook growth

[Rick Merritt](#)

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SAN JOSE, Calif. — As many as 59 million netbooks will ship in 2013, nearly 22 percent of the mobile PC market and up almost five-fold from 2008, according to [a new report](#) by Semico Research that profiles the major chip contenders in the sector.

Intel's x86-based Atom processor and Microsoft Windows have been the main ingredients in more than 90 percent of netbooks to date. But a broader diversity of ARM-based systems are coming, according to the Semico report that profiles netbook chip vendors including Freescale, Nvidia, Qualcomm and Texas Instruments.

The report also looks at x86-chip suppliers AMD, Intel and Via Technologies.

"This is not going to be just another Wintel platform," said Tony Massimini, Semico's chief of technology and author of the report. "But the compatibility and driver support [for existing PC applications and peripherals] has to be there," he said.

The ARM-based contenders will leverage their position in smart phones, to earn netbook design wins. "It's a pretty level playing field in terms of the [chip-level] products," he said of the ARM group.

Massimini said netbooks have cannibalized notebook sales to some extent. But that overlap will decrease as netbooks evolve and attract new customers such as first-time PC users, he added.

He did not quantify the amount of cannibalization to date, but down played the issue. "The erosion of the low end of notebooks may offer Intel an opportunity to get rid of older obsolete notebook processors sooner," he said.

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