

Seeing new market, HP expands line of mini-notebooks

Brandon Bailey

[Mercury News](#) Posted: 10/28/2008 09:01:00 PM PDT As more companies enter the growing market for smaller, cheaper portable computers, Hewlett-Packard is expanding its line of mini-notebooks with three new models aimed at a wider audience than the student market that originally was the target for such products.

HP planned to unveil the new computers, which weigh 2.25 pounds or 2.4 pounds with either a 9- or 10-inch screen, today. Two of the models are aimed at professionals and younger consumers and will sell for \$399 and \$379, less than the \$499 that HP charged earlier this year for its first model, the Mini-Note 2133. A third new model, aimed at women, has a red-flowered exterior from fashion designer Vivienne Tam and will sell for \$699.

Dell and Lenovo have also introduced new minis recently, expanding competition in a niche that was previously dominated by smaller companies like Acer and Asus. Worldwide, the market research firm IDC projects computer makers will sell 10.8 million units in the category this year and nearly twice that number in 2009.

"It's a huge amount of growth," said Bob O'Donnell, an IDC vice president, who said the minis are especially popular in Europe, where telecommunications companies have offered them at subsidized prices in the way that mobile phones are sold in the United States.

Minis generally have smaller keyboards and less processing power than full-size laptops, although HP touts its keyboards as being larger than some others. HP marketing executive

Carlos Montalvo said the new models may appeal to consumers who want portable and convenient access to music, photos or Internet applications, while using a full-size laptop or PC for more complex tasks such as photo or video editing.

Contact Brandon Bailey at bbailey@mercurynews.com or (408) 920-5022.