# Taiwan computer firms to launch tablet PCs

The Associated Press

Acer Inc. and AsusTek Computer Inc. are developing tablet computers to compete with Apple Inc.'s iPad and plan to unveil them at an industry show in June, an official said Tuesday.

Acer, the world's third-largest PC vendor, and AsusTek are among Taiwanese computer companies that are developing or assembling up to 10 tablets for foreign makers, said Li Chang, an executive of the Taipei Computer Association. He did not identify the other producers.

Acer and AsusTek are expected to display tablet PCs at the Computex show in Taipei on June 1-5, Li said.

Officials at Acer and AsusTek declined comment. But Taiwan's Economic Daily News quoted unidentified sources as saying the two firms will launch tablet PCs in the third quarter this year with a price tag below $400.

Apple Inc.'s iPad tablet computer hits U.S. shelves on Saturday and international releases are planned for later in April. The iPads will connect to Wi-Fi networks and cost $499, $599 or $699, depending on the data storage capacity.

A Taiwanese research firm, Topoly Research Institute, said Tuesday tablet PCs might cut into shrinking sales of mini-laptops known as netbooks, a market dominated by Acer and AsusTek.

By 2012, sales of tablet PCs could reach 50 million units worldwide, surpassing the figure for netbooks, Topology Research said.

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