The PC Market’s “Memflation” Moment: Why Q1 Shipment Growth Is a Mirage

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About this analysis

PC shipment data from Gartner and IDC suggests a healthy market on the surface, but both firms warn that Q1 2026 growth is being driven by inventory build, rising memory costs, and Windows 10 migration rather than real demand. For ITAD and recycling executives, the real story is downstream: memflation is likely to boost residual values for Windows 11-capable enterprise fleets even as a large cohort of non-upgradeable Windows 10 devices tilts toward materials recovery, while shifting vendor share, growing Apple volumes, and geopolitical freight shocks force a rethink of pricing, logistics, and Apple-specific capabilities over the next 18-36 months.

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