

Lenovo branded PCs debut

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Chinese hardware giant Lenovo has launched into the crowded local PC and notebook market with a new range of branded products less than one year after acquiring IBM's PC business.

While the world's third largest computer company has the right to use the IBM brand in its ThinkPad and ThinkCentre product lines for another four years, it would now start introducing its own Lenovo brand, built in Hong Kong and China, to the Australian reseller channel.

The new products under the Lenovo 3000 banner feature Intel and AMD chips and are targeted squarely at the SMB market. The notebooks include the Lenovo C100; silver systems that weight 2.8 kilos and are a departure from the appearance of the formerly black ThinkPads. The models will initially be equipped with Intel Pentium M or Celeron M chips.

The Lenovo 3000 desktops include the J100 and J105 models, which will run on Intel Pentium 4 or Celeron chips or AMD Sempron or Athlon processors. It's the first time Lenovo is introducing products with AMD chips to Australia.

Ingram Micro ordered several hundred Lenovo units last month and will be the exclusive distributor until May 1 when Synnex and IT Wholesale will also begin to stock the products.

David Nicol, product strategist for Australia and New Zealand at Lenovo told CRN that existing business partners - a mix of the ThinkPad and ThinkCentre resellers - will initially sell the new products. Lenovo will continue to recruit new partners to target the SMB market.

"We have over 600 contracted business partners and we aim to grow that," he said. In a competitive hardware market, the Lenovo brand would differentiate itself from other players with a service and support infrastructure supported by a local call centre, Nicol said. The machines also ship with a software set dubbed Lenovo Care.

A mass market retail strategy for the brand was still under consideration and Lenovo would introduce products with more consumer features over the next few months, Nicol said. Discussions were currently underway with local mass market retailers, he said.