

April's data revealed a channel caught between surging demand and acute supply-side stress.

Semiconductor sales posted their strongest growth in years, yet memory and storage costs climbed so sharply that hyperscalers explicitly flagged budget overruns and PC makers braced for double-digit CPU price rises into Q2. The smartphone market saw Apple claim a historic Q1 lead on iPhone 17 momentum in China, whilst Samsung reclaimed the top spot overall. Both are navigating the same memory price spike that has compressed margins across the industry. AR wearables and 3D printing hardware delivered triple-digit growth in specific segments, but the gains were dwarfed by the scale of component cost inflation rippling through every category.

The month's developments spanned flagship smartphone launches, advanced packaging bottlenecks at TSMC, a first-ever contraction in flexible AMOLED display shipments, and Amazon's £8.6bn Globalstar acquisition. Traditional PCs posted modest shipment growth even as analysts forecast declines ahead, industrial 3D printer revenues rebounded sharply, and all-solid-state battery pilots advanced in Asia.

A special note on a unique situation: the war in Iran and what it means for the channel.

A [Channelnomics survey](#) of 264 solution providers across North America and Europe in April found European partners bearing the brunt of the conflict's fallout. Half of European partners expect IT spending to decline through year-end, versus 42% in North America, with only 16% anticipating increased customer spending against one-third stateside.

The one bright spot is security: 33% of the European channel reports margin improvement from high-value security services as geopolitical risk drives investment, well above the 22% recorded in the US. Against that, 23% report declining margins from supply-chain disruption and rising energy costs, and just 10% of European partners report healthy unit-and-revenue growth, half the North American rate.

The largest number of price increases happened on April 6<sup>th</sup> with

**41,835** out of **197,992** products

- Global semiconductor sales reached £65.9bn in February 2026, up 61.8% YoY, with China surging 57.4% and Europe climbing 42.3%
- Memory costs emerged as the dominant constraint on hyperscale infrastructure budgets, with consumer DRAM contract prices forecast to rise 45–50% QoQ in Q2 2026
- Samsung retained pole position in the global smartphone market

This monthly IT Market Alert from KnowledgeBus provides procurement and IT professionals with timely market intelligence, pricing trends, and supply chain insights across the global IT market.

Our goal is to equip organisations with the insight and data needed to make informed IT procurement decisions - helping teams deliver value, transparency, and stronger governance across their technology purchasing.

Drawing on live market data, real-time pricing analysis, and benchmarking insights from the KnowledgeBus platform, this report supports informed procurement decisions across organisations in both the public and private sectors. It helps teams identify hidden inefficiencies in the IT supply chain, benchmark pricing, secure value for money, and maintain transparency in a rapidly evolving technology market.

This report highlights the market forces shaping IT procurement decisions for organisations in 2026.



## Severe IT Stock Constraints & Rapid Price Escalation

Procurement teams must act quickly while remaining fully compliant.



## Exchange rate

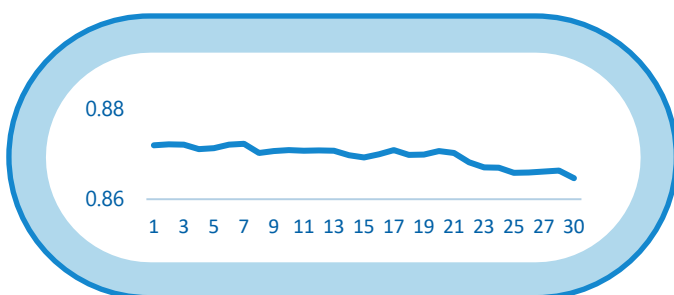
The euro finished April marginally stronger against the dollar, closing at 1.1702 after opening the month at 1.1605—a gain of 0.8%. Volatility defined the period. EUR/USD hit its monthly low of 1.1525 on 2 April before rallying to 1.1797 by 17 April, a 272-basis-point swing that reflected shifting expectations around Federal Reserve policy and eurozone growth data. The pair's trajectory mirrored broader dollar weakness as markets priced in a more dovish Fed stance, though the euro's gains remained modest by historical standards. Currency traders navigated a month of conflicting signals, with the mid-April peak proving short-lived as the pair retreated in the final week.

Sterling strengthened against the euro, with EUR/GBP declining 0.6% from 0.8711 at month-open to 0.8662 at close. The pound's resilience pushed the pair to its monthly low of 0.8658 on 23 April, whilst the euro managed its strongest showing at 0.8726 on 7 April. The narrower trading range—just 68 basis points compared to EUR/USD's 272—suggested more stable relative positioning between the UK and eurozone economies. Sterling's outperformance came despite ongoing concerns about UK growth, indicating that euro weakness rather than pound strength drove the movement.

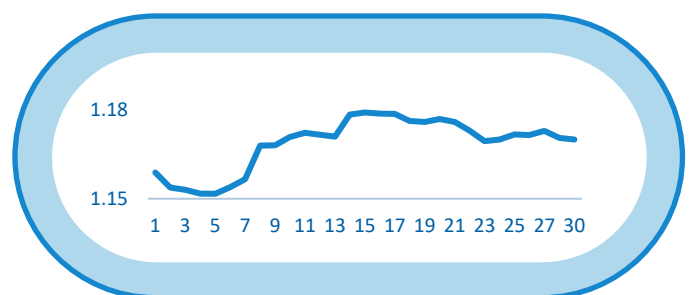
For European distributors, April's currency shifts created asymmetric margin pressure. The euro's modest dollar appreciation offered limited relief on US-sourced inventory (particularly semiconductors and storage) whilst the pound's strength against the euro squeezed margins for continental distributors selling into the UK market.

Channel players with significant sterling exposure faced a choice: absorb the 0.6% currency headwind or reprice, risking volume loss in an already competitive environment. Those managing cross-border pricing discovered that April's volatility, especially the mid-month EUR/USD spike, complicated hedging strategies. Forward contracts locked in during the early-month weakness proved costly by month-end. The divergent currency paths reinforced the importance of granular, market-specific pricing rather than pan-European rate cards.

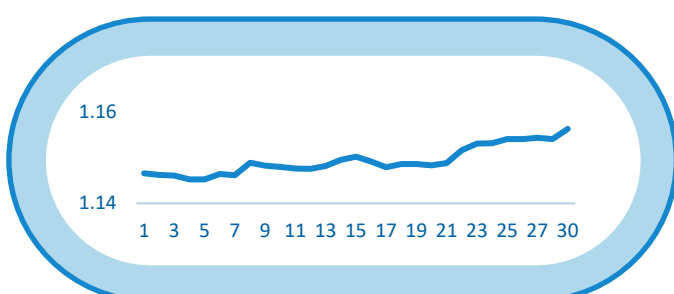
**Euro (EUR)  
per 1 British Pound (GBP)**



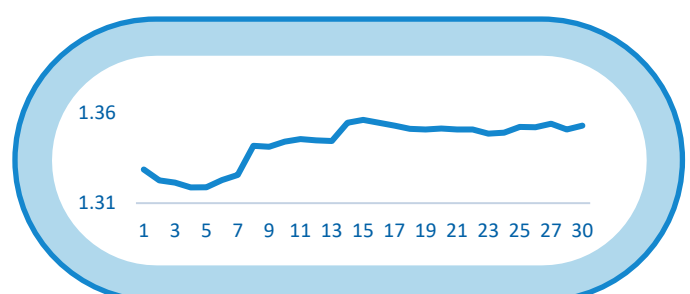
**Euro (EUR)  
per 1 US Dollar (USD)**



**British Pound (GBP)  
per 1 Euro (EUR)**



**British Pound (GBP)  
per 1 US Dollar (USD)**



## Phones and Tablets

Apple saw shipments up 10% YoY to 60.4m units. The iPhone 17 series drove growth, particularly in China where shipments surged 42% YoY. However, Samsung reclaimed the top position with 65.4m units shipped, up 8% YoY, supported by resilient flagship demand. Memory prices surged 130% QoQ, compressing margins across the industry.

## Traditional PCs

Global PC shipments rose 3.2% YoY to 64.8m units in 1Q26, but the trajectory masked deepening stress. Memory costs surged nearly twofold QoQ, while storage climbed threefold on Q1 2025 levels. Counterpoint Research expects CPU pricing to rise 10–25% into Q2, while IDC expects further shipment declines as system prices climb. Lenovo's star is rising, as it expanded its share to 25% on 8.7% growth. Conversely, HP slipped 4.9% to 12.1m units.

## Premium Ultramobiles & Wearables

AR smart glasses surged 148% YoY in H2 2025, driven by waveguide-based models that use lightbeam routing to create displays in front of the eye. Their advantage is that they have a thinner form factor, making them look more like conventional eyewear. Shipments jumped over 600% and captured 38% share, up from 13% a year earlier. Launches from Rokid, Meta, and Alibaba fuelled the shift, with AI-capable processors accounting for roughly 70% of waveguide shipments.

In China, Huawei dominated smartwatches with 42% share and seven of the top ten series, whilst Apple slipped 5% and exited the top-ten list entirely.

## Processors, MEMs, Semiconductors

Global semiconductor sales reached £65.9bn in February 2026, up 61.8% YoY, with China surging 57.4% and Europe climbing 42.3%. AI compute chips have transitioned rapidly from 4nm to 3nm between late 2025 and 2026, with TSMC's 3nm capacity expected to surpass 5/4nm by year-end. Severe Chip-on-Wafer-on-Substrate advanced packaging shortages persisted, though TSMC planned to expand capacity over 60% by 2027.



## Memory

Memory costs emerged as the dominant constraint on hyperscale infrastructure budgets, with Meta explicitly identifying the category as exceeding capital allocation plans despite £92.8– £108.1bn in planned 2026 expenditure. The DRAM market will nearly double in value, according to Omdia, while TrendForce says consumer DRAM contract prices will rise 45–50% QoQ in Q2. Supply constraints are expected to persist through year-end, with meaningful relief unlikely until well into 2027.

## Printers

Global 3D printer hardware revenues rose 25% YoY in Q4 2025, driven by a 47% surge in entry-level shipments and a 12% rebound in industrial systems. Chinese vendors accounted for over 90% of entry-level shipments, with Bambu Lab holding a 37% market share. Industrial polymer printers climbed 23%, whilst vat photopolymerization systems surged 39% YoY.

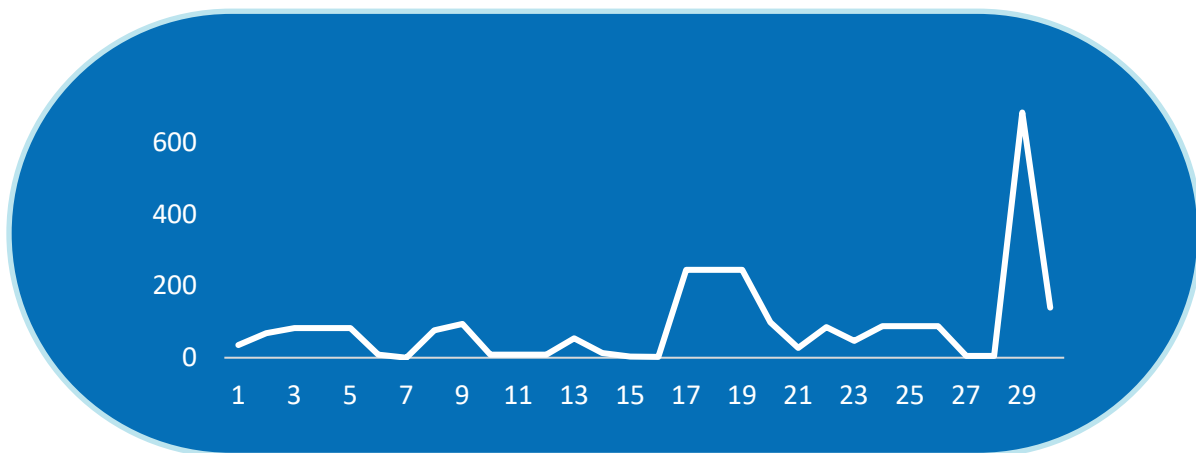
Price increases peaked at 41,835 items on April 6, falling to 237 on April 16, with an average of 16,354 daily price increases across the month (down 17.7% from the previous month).

Price reductions saw their lowest and highest values on consecutive days, hitting 46,851 items on April 15 and 439 items on April 16. The average for price drops was 22,218 across the month.

Stock replenishment went from just 163 units on April 7 to 16,456 units on April 15, averaging 3,895 daily additions.

Stock cuts ranged from their low of 1,199 units on April 7 to the peak of 18,158 units on April 16, with an average daily decrease of 9,800 units.

## New Products



## Monthly stats

