Survey: Computers, Electronics Keep Getting Better

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SAN FRANCISCO (AP) — Consumers are as happy as they've ever been with their computers, and those with Apple computers are the most pleased, a new survey says.

The American Customer Satisfaction Index's score for personal computers, which is part of a larger survey that also includes consumer sentiments on home electronics, totaled 78 out of 100 for the past 12 months. That is up 3 points from the previous year's score and higher than any other year but the baseline 1994 score.

Within the computer category, Apple Inc. scored the highest for the seventh straight year, earning 86 points. That's up 2 points from last year and is Apple's highest score thus far.

Apple's recent financial results seem to bear out a high level of satisfaction, too. In its most recent quarter, the company sold 3.5 million Mac computers, a 33 percent increase from a year earlier.

Most makers of Windows-based computers also saw scores improve. ACSI gives at least partial credit to Windows 7, the newest version of Microsoft Corp.'s computer operating software. Last year, Windows 7 replaced an older, less popular version, Windows Vista.

Dell Inc. scored 77 points, up 2 points from the previous year. Hewlett-Packard Co. scored 77 points for its HP-brand computers, up 3 points from last year, and 74 points for its Compaq-brand computers, which is the same as last year.

A category that lumps together smaller computer makers like Sony Corp. and Toshiba Corp. scored 77 points, rising 3 points from the year before.

Electronics such as TV sets and DVD and Blu-ray players scored 85 points overall, rising 2 points from the year before and marking the highest score the survey has seen thus far. The survey indicated that lower prices for flat-screen TVs and DVD and Blu-ray players helped make consumers feel happier about making these purchases.

The survey was created by the University of Michigan but is now run by ACSI LLC, which is a private company.

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