

Rising Memory Costs and Their Growing Impact on Phones, PCs, SSDs and Gaming Hardware in 2026 — YY-IC Market Analysis

YY-IC says the latest memory surge has moved beyond chip supply chains and is now reshaping mainstream electronics pricing worldwide.

SHENZHEN, CHINA, March 18, 2026 /EINPresswire.com/ -- YY-IC today released an updated market analysis saying the 2026 [memory](#) surge is affecting mainstream electronics pricing, affordable device availability, and procurement conditions worldwide. According to the company, rising DRAM and NAND costs are affecting the economics of smartphones, PCs, SSDs, gaming

hardware, and other cost-sensitive device categories, with visible effects on shipment forecasts, retail pricing, product configurations, and sourcing conditions across global hardware markets. Gartner said soaring memory costs are projected to reduce worldwide PC shipments by 10.4%

and smartphone shipments by 8.4% in 2026 versus 2025, while combined DRAM and SSD costs could rise 130% by the end of 2026, pushing PC prices up about 17% and smartphone prices up about 13%.

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The 2026 memory surge has already crossed from component inflation into consumer price inflation, and affordable devices may be the biggest casualty.”

YY-IC spokesperson

YY-IC said those forecasts indicate that the current memory cycle is extending beyond [semiconductor](#) supply chains into broader consumer electronics markets. In the company's analysis, rising memory costs are no longer only an upstream issue for semiconductor buyers,

distributors, and hardware specialists. As memory costs increasingly affect what buyers pay for phones, laptops, desktops, storage upgrades, and gaming systems, the market impact is becoming more visible across technology, business, and consumer affordability discussions. YY-



IC said the 2026 memory surge is affecting not only component pricing, but also mainstream device affordability and the viability of low-cost configurations.

The latest March pricing signals support that assessment. TrendForce said on March 4 that DRAM spot prices remained above contract prices and that NAND spot prices continued to move higher ahead of second-quarter negotiations. (References www.trendforce.com/news/2026/03/04/insights-memory-spot-price-update-dram-spots-top-contracts-sentiment-cautious-ahead-of-q2-negotiations/) In the same update, TrendForce said 512Gb TLC wafer prices climbed 14.7% in one week. TrendForce's pricing pages also continued to indicate intense PC DRAM contract-price pressure in March, with suppliers prioritizing major brand customers and tight supply continuing to support strong pricing. YY-IC said these conditions indicate a market that is still feeding higher costs into the next round of pricing decisions rather than stabilizing.



AI demand is reshaping memory allocation and supply priorities-YY-IC



The pressure has moved from chips to checkout prices-YY-IC

According to YY-IC, the current environment should not be viewed only as a short-lived memory upcycle. The company said the market is also being shaped by supply allocation linked to AI infrastructure demand. In this environment, larger buyers with stronger balance sheets, larger commitments, and better access to long-term arrangements may be better positioned to defend supply than smaller, more price-sensitive buyers. YY-IC said this is one reason the 2026 memory story is affecting not only costs, but also supply access and market flexibility.

Micron's public positioning also reflects continued market tightness. Micron has told investors that tight supply-demand conditions are expected to extend beyond 2026 and that its fiscal 2026 capital spending is projected at approximately \$20 billion, weighted to the second half of the fiscal year. March reporting also indicated that Micron's expansion efforts, including the completed acquisition of a Taiwan fabrication facility and future expansion, could lift its global

memory production capacity by nearly 20% by 2027–2028, while still leaving demand from key customers only partially covered. YY-IC said this supports the view that aggressive investment is continuing against demand that remains difficult to satisfy.

The effect is becoming easier to see in products familiar to mainstream buyers. Smartphones are one of the clearest examples because memory is a cost category that can quickly affect handset pricing, base storage configurations, promotional flexibility, and refresh timing. Gartner’s forecast that smartphone shipments will decline 8.4% in 2026 while smartphone prices rise about 13% suggests a market where affordability is becoming harder to protect. YY-IC said the burden is likely to be felt most sharply in entry-level and lower-midrange phones, where brands have less room to absorb higher memory costs without changing specifications, trimming promotions, or steering buyers toward more expensive models. This can mean less storage at the same price point, fewer aggressively priced launch models, or a shorter life for older pricing tiers.



YY-IC Insight-Affordable devices under pressure



Strategic Supplement to the Authorized Distribution System-YY-IC

The PC market provides an even clearer picture of what happens once memory inflation reaches mainstream computing. Gartner said global PC shipments are projected to fall 10.4% in 2026 while PC prices rise about 17% by year-end because of the combined surge in DRAM and SSD costs. March reporting from Tom’s Hardware, citing IDC, said IDC cut its 2026 global PC shipment forecast to 252.53 million units, down 11.3% from 284.7 million in 2025, while still expecting the total PC market value to rise to \$274 billion because average selling prices are increasing. YY-IC said that “lower volumes, higher market value” pattern indicates that the current memory cycle is affecting mainstream device affordability and not only upstream component pricing.

According to YY-IC, affordable devices may face particular pressure if current cost conditions continue. Gartner’s February outlook, reflected in broader March coverage, indicates that the

rapid increase in memory and storage costs is putting acute pressure on low-cost computing categories. IDC-linked March reporting also said the era of bargain-priced PCs is fading as memory shortages continue and higher component costs lift average selling prices. YY-IC said that once memory and storage take up a larger share of bill-of-materials cost, budget hardware loses room to absorb cost increases. Premium systems may have more margin to absorb higher costs or pass them through, while budget systems typically have less flexibility. If low-cost PC configurations become harder to sustain at scale, the impact may extend beyond vendor margins into replacement cycles, affordability for households and small businesses, and access to mainstream computing.

Storage is following the same path. YY-IC said SSDs are important because they translate NAND inflation into a category buyers can see immediately when upgrading a laptop, selecting a desktop configuration, or comparing storage tiers on a new system. TrendForce's March update showed continued NAND strength rather than relief. Framework then provided one of the clearest downstream examples. March reporting said Framework raised RAM prices for the third consecutive month and also began raising SSD prices, tied to ongoing memory and storage shortages that the company linked largely to AI data-center demand. The same report said Framework's DDR5 SO-DIMM pricing moved to roughly \$13 to \$18 per GB in March from \$12 to \$16 in February. YY-IC said those customer-facing changes show the memory market affecting what customers pay in real time, rather than only appearing in supplier quotations or analyst notes.

Comments from major storage players point in the same direction. March reporting on Seagate's commercial leadership said storage price increases are becoming "the new normal" in an AI-driven supercycle. YY-IC said such language suggests that large industry participants are no longer treating the current environment as a brief spike that will quickly revert to historical norms. Once vendors, distributors, and channel partners begin planning around elevated memory and storage costs as a persistent condition, pricing discipline, inventory strategy, and product planning can all change with it. YY-IC said this is one reason the market is increasingly focused not only on whether memory prices are rising, but also on how far those increases may continue to affect mainstream electronics affordability through the rest of 2026.

Gaming hardware is where the shift becomes particularly visible. Tom's Hardware reported that MSI plans to raise gaming product prices by 15% to 30% because of severe shortages of DRAM and Nvidia GPUs. The same report said MSI's general manager described 2026 as the company's most severe year since it was founded and said 16GB memory module prices had risen from about \$40 a year ago to roughly \$170 to \$200. The report also said MSI expects GPU supply to remain short and is responding by emphasizing mid-to-high-end products while scaling back some budget offerings. YY-IC said this is one of the clearest examples of how the memory crunch is spreading beyond semiconductor manufacturing and large-scale computing infrastructure into ordinary purchasing decisions.

Retail memory pricing in March adds another layer of evidence. March coverage in the U.S.

consumer market reported that 32GB DDR5 kits had climbed to \$359.99, with lower-priced kits disappearing from shelves almost as soon as they were listed. YY-IC said examples like that show the market moving from wholesale inflation into visible retail scarcity and price shock. Once affordable inventory disappears quickly and only higher-priced options remain, the memory story becomes more visible to buyers trying to build a PC, upgrade an existing system, or compare prebuilt configurations.

Another defining feature of the 2026 market is that the pressure is not shared evenly. Large OEMs, hyperscalers, cloud providers, and top-tier brands generally have more tools to defend their supply positions. They can commit further ahead, prepay more easily, and secure better allocation. Smaller firms, regional brands, and lower-margin product lines usually cannot. March reporting highlighted that some smaller businesses were dealing with prices that shifted hourly as they competed for remaining supply, while separate coverage of Phison-linked commentary described overnight NAND price jumps severe enough to strain both cash and inventory positions. YY-IC said these signals indicate that the current market is not only experiencing inflation, but also widening differences between companies that can lock supply and those that must continue chasing it.

According to YY-IC, that asymmetry can change competition in downstream electronics. In a stable market, strategy is often centered on demand forecasting, positioning, and differentiation. In a stressed memory market, strategy becomes more closely tied to supply access. Brands with stronger allocation may be better able to protect launch timing, preserve better shelf presence, and hold pricing more predictably. Smaller players may be forced to redesign configurations, reduce promotional aggressiveness, raise prices faster, or abandon certain low-cost SKUs altogether. YY-IC said this is another reason the 2026 memory cycle matters to a broad audience: it is affecting not only what electronics cost, but also which kinds of electronics remain viable. In categories where margins were already thin, the loss of affordable configurations may matter as much as the headline increase in DRAM or NAND prices.

The same pattern is beginning to affect after-sales support and replacement expectations. One March consumer-market report said Silicon Power updated its U.S. RMA language to account for cases in which replacement RAM or SSD products may be unavailable, offering refunds at original purchase price if replacement stock could not be supplied. YY-IC said this kind of policy shift shows shortages are no longer influencing only new-product pricing. They are beginning to change warranty, replacement, and service assumptions as well. When a market becomes tight enough that replacement availability becomes uncertain, the memory crunch may affect customer experience in addition to procurement conditions.

For procurement teams, the implications go well beyond paying more for DRAM or NAND. YY-IC said the 2026 memory crunch is now affecting lead-time visibility, supplier prioritization, alternate sourcing, product-configuration decisions, and continuity planning. A cost problem can quickly become an operational continuity problem when allocation becomes selective and lower-cost inventory disappears. "In the semiconductor industry, the most expensive part is often not

the most advanced [chip](#), but the 5-cent discontinued component that halts your entire production line,” said a spokesperson for YY-IC. “The same logic applies in the current memory market. What starts as a unit-cost issue can become a production risk when a required configuration can no longer be sourced on time or at a viable cost.”

YY-IC said this is why its latest analysis focuses not only on price movements, but on what those price movements mean. Gartner has projected lower shipments and higher device prices. TrendForce has shown that spot and contract conditions remained strained into March. Micron has told investors that tight supply-demand conditions are expected to extend beyond 2026. March market reporting has also shown a lower-volume but higher-value PC market, rising prices for RAM and SSD products, higher gaming-hardware prices, and stronger evidence that AI infrastructure demand is affecting mainstream electronics categories. Taken together, YY-IC said, these developments show a market in which memory inflation is no longer confined to the semiconductor sector. It is now influencing mainstream device pricing, affordable hardware availability, and the competitive conditions under which brands operate.

In YY-IC’s view, the biggest risk for the rest of 2026 is not simply that memory remains expensive. The bigger risk is that elevated pricing and selective allocation continue to r
YY-IC described itself as a strategic supplement to the authorized distribution system and said the current environment highlights the value of timely market interpretation, supplemental sourcing support, and faster reassessment of continuity risks when upstream allocation changes. The company said its purpose in releasing this analysis is to clarify a structural shift now visible across consumer electronics pricing, procurement behavior, and component availability. YY-IC said it will continue monitoring price movements, allocation trends, downstream product effects, and sourcing conditions through 2026, with particular attention to how AI-related demand continues to affect consumer-facing devices, lower-cost configurations, and smaller buyers in the global electronics market.

About YY-IC

YY-IC is a semiconductor sourcing and supply-chain support company based in Shenzhen, China. The company focuses on supplemental procurement scenarios across electronics manufacturing, with attention to hard-to-source components, discontinued parts, allocation pressure, and continuity risks that can affect production planning across global supply chains.

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