

By ~~Eric~~ Botezatu, Hardware Editor

Dell to Shovel New Low-Cost Mobile Computers

They will be distributed on the emerging markets

System builder Dell plans on introducing some more low-cost offerings on the Asian market during this year. The announcement was made by a company executive during yesterday's meeting. "We've been pretty much a leader in the mid- and high-end price bands. We haven't played as strongly in the lower price bands," said Steve Felice, president of Dell Asia-Pacific. The new policy will bring some new models of low-cost notebooks for both average users and small businesses on the Asian markets. The company has previously hinted at a low-cost notebook PC to compete with Asustek's Eee PC, but Felice refused to elaborate on this issue and only said that Dell is currently working on a new notebook offering that will hit the retailers' shelves with various price tags. "Let me just say that we've got some great things in our R&D labs and we're coming out with some really exciting products," Felice said. "I'm just going to tell people to just watch and look. I think they'll be impressed with what Dell has to come out with over this coming year." Asustek was quite successful with its ultra-portable, low-cost and low performance sub-notebook in the Eee family, and the industry learned a tough lesson as far as the low-cost market is concerned. The Eee PC comes with a pre-installed version of Linux operating system, called XandrOS, and is based on hardware components that have been used in Intel's Classmate PC educational miniature computer. Most of the Eee's success was due to its low price and miniature size. Low-cost notebooks are mostly appealing to the emerging markets, as well as to the developing countries, and PC manufacturers have quickly geared up to provide them with the necessary offerings. Currently, all the major PC vendors, such as Dell, Hewlett-Packard and Acer are supplying their own version of sub-notebook. However, low-cost mobile PCs will not cut the market's appetite for mainstream notebooks. "In the scheme of the total share of all notebooks, I think it's still going to remain in its relative position, let's say. I don't think it's going to dominate," Felice said. The company expects high demand in all its notebook offerings.