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China overtakes U.S. as world's leading exporter of information technology goods

China overtook the United States in 2004 to become the world's leading exporter of information and communications technology (ICT) goods such as mobile phones, laptop computers and digital cameras, according to OECD data.

China exported USD 180 billion worth of ICT goods in 2004, compared with U.S. exports in the same category valued at USD 149 billion. In 2003, the U.S. led with exports of ICT goods worth USD 137 billion, followed by China with USD 123 billion.

China's share of total world trade in ICT goods, including both imports and exports, rose to USD 329 billion in 2004, up from USD 234 billion in 2003 and USD 35 billion in 1996. By comparison, the U.S. share of total world trade stood at USD 375 billion in 2004, USD 301 billion in 2003 and USD 230 billion in 1996.

The data show a shift towards more trade between China and other Asian countries, with a corresponding decline in ICT imports to this region from the European Union and the U.S. To manufacture laptops and advanced mobile phones, China previously relied on electronic components, such as computer chips, imported from the EU and U.S. These are now also being increasingly sourced from other Asian countries, including Japan (18% of China's ICT imports), Chinese Taipei (16%), Korea (13%) and Malaysia (8%).

The increased share of Japan's exports to China, for example, was mainly in electronic components. China itself is also manufacturing and exporting more electronic components than ever before, with these now forming China's second largest export item, after computer and related equipment.

China is the single largest exporter of ICT goods to the US, supplying 27% of all US imports of these goods in 2004, up from only 10% in 2000. Its ICT trade surplus with the US stood at USD 34 billion in 2004 and with the European Union at USD 27 billion.

For more information, journalists should contact Sacha Wunsch-Vincent, OECD Directorate for science, technology and industry (sacha.wunsch-vincent@oecd.org).

A copy of the report is available at
http://www.oecd.org/document/8/0,2340,en_2649_33703_35833096_1_1_1_1,00.html

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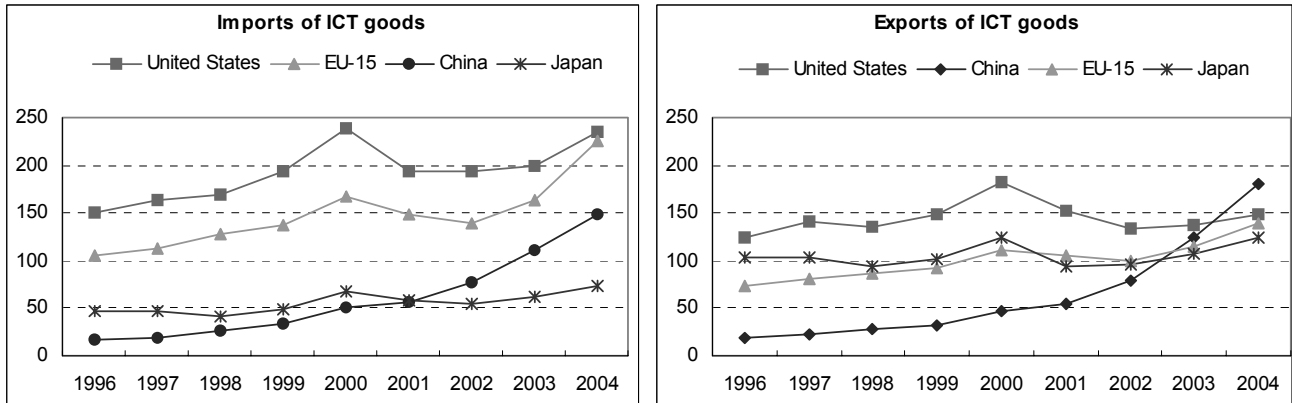
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Figure 1. Imports and exports of ICT goods, billions of USD in current prices

Current USD billions



Note: Data for the EU exclude intra-EU trade. The EU figures are not yet available for 2004.

Source: OECD, ITS database