

Top 10 Colour inkjet & Mono laser printers

		Colour inkjet printers	Max paper size	Max resolution	Quoted print speed	Actual print speed	Supported interface types	Dimensions (wxdxh)	Ink costs	Print life (pages)		
PC ADVISOR BEST BUY	1	 Canon Bubble Jet i865 0870 514 3723 www.canon.co.uk Last month 1	• £169 inc VAT • 1-year warranty • First review Dec 03	A4	4,800x1,200dpi	B=23ppm C=16ppm	B=11ppm C=8ppm	USB 1.1, parallel	420x311x185mm	B1=£8 B2=£11 C=£8x3	B1=440 B2=330 C=440	
	The i865 offers an unbeatable combination of value for money and quality. Photo printing is brilliant with sharp detail and absolutely stunning colours – even when printing in draft mode. There's a good software bundle, a generous supply of paper and this model even allows printing directly on to CD-R or DVD media.											
	PC ADVISOR RECOMMENDED	2	 Canon Bubble Jet i850 0870 514 3723 www.canon.co.uk Last month 2	• £164 inc VAT • 1-year warranty • First review Apr 03	A4	4,800x1,200dpi	B=22ppm C=14ppm	B=9ppm C=7ppm	USB 1.1, parallel	418x274x159mm	B=£11 C=£8x3	B=330 C=460
		Canon delivers on all fronts – speed, quality and ink-nozzle technology. The separate colour cartridges mean that you only have to replace the ink that runs out, saving you money. The i850 also offers fast, high-quality photo printing. It produced a detailed and colourful photo printout in just three minutes.										
		3	 Canon Bubble Jet i470D 0870 514 3723 www.canon.co.uk Last month 3	• £149 inc VAT • 1-year warranty • First review Oct 03	A4	4,800x1,200dpi	B=18ppm C=12ppm	B=10.5ppm C=3ppm	USB 1.1 parallel	393x298x218mm	B=£5 C=£11	B=130 C=160
The i470D is aimed at the digital camera enthusiast. Connect a Canon camera to the printer and the memory card slot allows you to print directly from all major flash memory types. With the Photo Viewer option you can display photos on a PC at the touch of a button, although we'd like to see an LCD panel.												
	4	 Lexmark Z705 0870 444 0044 www.lexmark.co.uk Last month 4	• £53 inc VAT • 1-year warranty • First review Dec 03	A4	4,800x1,200dpi	B=17ppm C=10ppm	B=5.5ppm C=3ppm	USB 1.1	439x236x152mm	B=£22 C=£28	B=225 C=260	
The compact and light Z705 could almost be a portable model – if it had a battery. In spite of its 2.1kg frame the Lexmark isn't flimsy, but its size does mean that you only get a 100-page input tray. Print speeds are slow. Image quality is moderate and replacement ink cartridges are pricey compared to the cost of the device.												
	5	 Epson Stylus Photo 900 0800 220 546 www.epson.co.uk Last month 5	• £199 inc VAT • 1-year warranty • First review Dec 03	A4	5,760x7,200dpi	B=9ppm C=8.8ppm	B=5ppm C=3ppm	USB 1.1, parallel	493x306x183mm	B=£19 C=£21	B=540 C=330	
Bulkier than the other printers, the 900 comes armed with a slew of accessories and special features. It can print directly to recordable CD and DVD media, for instance. Print quality is excellent, but considering the high price tag we expected far more in terms of speed. This model is also fairly expensive to run.												

		Mono laser printers	Installed memory	Hardware resolution	Quoted A4 print speed	Actual print speed	Supported interface types	Dimensions (wxdxh)	Cost of toner	Print life (pages)	
			Maximum memory	Software resolution				Weight			
PC ADVISOR BEST BUY	1	 Brother HL-5050 0870 830 4000 www.brother.co.uk Last month 1	• £230 inc VAT • 1-year warranty • First review Jun 03	16MB 144MB	600x600dpi 2,400x600dpi	16ppm	14ppm	USB 2.0, parallel	382x401x252mm 11.5kg	£51	6,500
	Though designed for heavy-duty use, Brother's HL-5050 has a reasonable price tag that puts smaller home-based printers to shame and generous running costs to boot. It might not offer the fastest print speeds, but when it comes to performance and value for money the HL-5050 wins hands down.										
PC ADVISOR RECOMMENDED	2	 Brother HL-5040 0870 830 4000 www.brother.co.uk Last month 2	• £180 inc VAT • 1-year warranty • First review Dec 03	8MB 136MB	600x600dpi 2,400x600dpi	16ppm	14ppm	USB 2.0, parallel	382x383x252mm 10.5kg	£51	6,500
	Not much different to its HL-5050 brother, the HL-5040 has a couple of issues concerning print quality that mark out this model as the poor relation. But the printer is very cheap to run, costing just 0.8 pence per page. It's sturdy and well built and won't have a problem surviving in a busy office environment.										
	3	 Lexmark E323 0870 444 0044 www.lexmark.co.uk Last month 3	• £252 inc VAT • 1-year warranty • First review Dec 03	16MB 144MB	600x600dpi 1,200x1,200dpi	19ppm	15ppm	USB 1.1, parallel	391x361x221mm 9kg	£88	3,000
Excellent print quality at all resolutions and a respectable output rate count among the Lexmark's strengths. But high running costs (including expensive consumables) make the E323 far from economical. Memory of 16MB is about the norm for printers at this price, but it can be expanded to a massive 144MB.											
	4	 Oki B4300N 01753 819 819 www.oki.co.uk Last month 4	• £349 inc VAT • 1-year warranty • First review Jul 03	16MB 48MB	600x1,200dpi n/a	18ppm	18ppm	USB 2.0, parallel	355x395x200mm 9kg	£49	6,000
The B4300N looks like a personal printer but has the performance levels of a mid-range workgroup mono laser. It might be a bit more expensive than some of the other printers in its class, but you get superb running costs and ease of use combined with decent functionality and quality performance.											
	5	 Xerox Phaser 3130 0870 241 3245 www.xerox.com/office/pr Last month 5	• £285 inc VAT • 1-year warranty • First review Dec 03	32MB 32MB	600x600dpi 1,200x600dpi	16ppm	13ppm	USB 2.0, parallel	348x355x193mm 7kg	£65	3,000
The Phaser 3130 only weighs 7kg making it ideal for home use. Put it in an office situation, however, and it will struggle to keep up with the demands of all but the smallest businesses due to its slow print speeds and high consumable costs. The installed memory is generous but there's no room to upgrade.											

Buying advice

Colour inkjets & Mono lasers

• **Price** There's no point in paying through the nose if all you're going to print is text. Don't spend more than £150 for an inkjet unless you want photo-quality. Mono lasers cost more, so know what your needs are before you buy. If it's going to be heavily used then look at mid-range networkable devices.

• **Interface** Most printers give the option of parallel and USB ports. USB 2.0 offers faster data-transfer rates than the standard USB interface.

• **Resolution** Focus on the hardware resolution – 600x600dpi is fine for a mono laser but for high-quality prints 1,200x1,200dpi is better. Most colour inkjets can handle 4,800x1,200dpi.

• **Speed** Take quoted figures with a pinch of salt. For an inkjet printer 9ppm in mono and 5ppm in colour

is good. For low-end laser printers 14ppm is adequate, but for a heavy-duty £400+ model expect 20ppm.

• **Running costs** Check the cost of replacement cartridges and find out how many pages of coverage the cartridge gives. From this you can work out the cost per page. With inkjets 4ppm (pence per page) for mono prints and 7ppm for colour is the maximum, although costs rise for a photo printer. Mono laser costs are much lower.