

MONOCHROME LASER AND COLOUR INKJET PRINTERS

Monochrome laser printers												
Details	Last month's position	First reviewed	Price (ex VAT)	Warranty	Installed/maximum memory	Hardware resolution	Software enhanced	Actual print speed	Dimensions (width x depth x height)	Interface type(s)	Toner costs	Print life (pages)
1 Oki OkiPage 14ex 01753 819 819 www.oki.co.uk	1	Sept 02	£272	1-year	4MB/36MB	600x1,200dpi	no	13ppm	345x395x215mm	USB, parallel	£26	4,000
2 Lexmark E320 0870 444 0044 www.lexmark.co.uk	2	Sept 02	£239	1-year	4MB/68MB	600dpi	no	13ppm	380x362x221mm	USB, parallel	£71	3,000
3 Brother HL-1850 0870 830 4000 www.brother.co.uk	3	Sept 02	£425	1-year	16MB/144MB	600dpi	1,200dpi	14ppm	425x424x275mm	USB, parallel	£51	6,500
4 Minolta-QMS PagePro 1200W 01784 442 255 www.minolta-qms.co.uk	4	Sept 02	£169	1-year	8MB/8MB	1,200dpi	no	10.2ppm	515x362x381mm	USB, parallel	£70	6,000
5 Minolta-QMS PagePro 1250E 01784 442 255 www.minolta-qms.co.uk	5	Sept 02	£295	3-year	16MB/144MB	1,200dpi	no	12.6ppm	389x441x259mm	USB, parallel	£70	6,000

Colour inkjet printers												
Details	Last month's position	First reviewed	Price (ex VAT)	Warranty	Maximum paper size	Maximum resolution	Quoted print speed	Actual print speed	Dimensions (width x depth x height)	Interface type(s)	Ink costs	Print life (pages)
1 Epson Stylus C62 0800 220 546 www.epson.co.uk	1	Nov 02	£65	1-year	A4	1,440x72dpi	B=14ppm C=13.9ppm	B=7ppm C=5ppm	480x260x181mm	USB, parallel	B=£11 C=£16	B=640 C=300
2 HP PhotoSmart 7350 0870 547 4747 www.hp.com/uk	2	Oct 02	£165	1-year	A4	1,200x1,200dpi	B=10ppm C=11ppm	B=3.5ppm C=3.5ppm	475x390x160mm	USB	B=£25 C=£30	B=400 C=400
3 HP DeskJet 3820 0870 547 4747 www.hp.com/uk	3	Nov 02	£85	1-year	A4	1,200x1,200dpi	B=12ppm C=10ppm	B=6ppm C=3ppm	445x380x197mm	USB, parallel	B=£16 C=£31	B=495 C=450
4 Epson Stylus Photo 925 0800 220 546 www.epson.co.uk	4	Nov 02	£205	1-year	A4	5,760x1,440dpi	B=8.5ppm C=8.5ppm	B=6ppm C=4ppm	492x290x228mm	USB	B=£22 C=£18	B=540 C=220
5 HP DeskJet 5550 0870 547 4747 www.hp.com/uk	5	Nov 02	£124	1-year	A4	1,200x1,200dpi	B=17ppm C=12ppm	B=7ppm C=5ppm	456x385x156mm	USB 2.0, parallel	B=£22 C=£31	B=450 C=400

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1 Oki OkiPage 14ex

The Best Buy OkiPage looks basic, but its design works in its favour. The paperfeed system, for instance, is simple but flawless. Printouts are always uncreased and the mechanism is strong enough to withstand wear and tear. In contrast to most sub-£300 lasers, the Oki has a comprehensive control panel built in, so you can adjust important settings without touching the PC. The 14ex is a performance printer, and its fine text definition and detailed graphics reproduction certainly reinforce this title. Speed is impressive – 13ppm (pages per minute) is a fantastic achievement at 300dpi (dots per inch). The Best Buy Oki is also one of the cheapest models to run. Whether you want a well-priced inkjet replacement for your home office, or a heavy-duty page churner for work, the 14ex stands up to the task.



COLOUR INKJET PRINTERS

1 Epson Stylus C62

A great combination of low price, good-quality output and cheap running costs ensures the Epson Stylus sits at the top of the chart. The C62 is a lightweight U-bend feed printer that connects to your PC via a USB or parallel connection. It comes with a quick-start guide and setup is simple thanks to onscreen prompts. The maximum resolution for printing on plain paper is 1,440x720dpi (dots per inch) and for best photo printing the C62 offers an optimised resolution of 5,760x720dpi. All our printing results above draft mode gave great results and in fairly speedy times. For photo printing we suggest getting the best photo paper as results depend on this. While the C62 doesn't live up to its quoted print speeds it's still above average, pulling in 7ppm (pages per minute) for monochrome and 5ppm for colour. More importantly, though, it's a low-maintenance printer and is easily the cheapest to run.



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2 Lexmark E320

Proving once again that it knows how to keep performance high and price low, Lexmark has delivered exceptional speed and image quality for a mere £239. In practice, the Recommended E320 operates more like an inkjet than a laser printer thanks, in part, to the inkjet-style rear-mounted paperfeed. It's in performance, however, that the E320 shows what it's made of. Graphics and text reproduction is clean and precise at 600dpi, and the print speeds remain close to 13ppm (pages per minute).



3 Brother HL-1850

Even though the HL-1850 falls short of its stated 18ppm (pages per minute) it's still impressive. The Brother's design is clean and uncluttered and its paper tray can hold up to 250 pages. We experienced no problems with page-curling or jamming, and the intuitive installation routine means operating the Brother is simple. This isn't the cheapest printer, but the low running costs will compensate frequent users.



4 Minolta-QMS PagePro 1200W

Costing a mere £169, the 1200W's maximum 1,200dpi (dots per inch) resolution is superior to the 600dpi Brother, which is over double the price. Inevitably, though, there are flaws. The paper handling is poor, and Minolta uses a plastic paper support instead of a proper tray. This is acceptable for small print jobs, but isn't going to stand up to the strain of heavy use. The PagePro's onboard memory won't guarantee high speed, but if you're used to inkjets then 10ppm (pages per minute) won't seem much of a drop.



5 Minolta-QMS PagePro 1250E

The PagePro 1250E is a good choice for the home or the office, although its fragile casing may not last well in a busy business environment. The Minolta-QMS handles text and graphics with equal aplomb, giving most of the similarly priced printers a run for their money. Again, speed was relatively good, but the 1250E did drop to more average rates at the highest resolution.



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2 HP PhotoSmart 7350

The low-cost 7350 is a photo printer and, as such, is designed for use without a PC. HP claims that the PhotoRet technology combined with its six ink colours will offer the best in digital image printing. This well-built model has two USB ports, one for connecting a PC and another for attaching HP-only cameras. There are several card slots compatible with nearly all storage media, including Sony's Memory Stick. When it comes to printing high-resolution digital images the 7350 photo printer is excellent. Printing on A4 using an optimised resolution of 4,800dpi with PhotoRet IV takes about 15 minutes, but it's worth the wait. Colours are lush and details are sharp.



3 HP DeskJet 3820

At only 3kg the DeskJet 3820 is one of the smallest and lightest models we've had in our labs. HP has kept things simple with just three hardware buttons on the righthand side – one of which offers an instant cancel. Setup is easy but, as with most models in our Top 10, you'll have to pay extra for a parallel or USB cable. The maximum optical resolution is 1,200x1,200dpi (dots per inch) and it offers an optimised print mode of 4,800dpi for photo printing. Unfortunately, the 3820 doesn't come with HP's PhotoRet technology, but even without it we saw amazing photo printing results with this cheap model.



4 Epson Stylus Photo 925

The Stylus Photo 925 is a costly, feature-rich printer that can be used with or without your PC. It can print photos at an optimised resolution of 5,760x1,440dpi (dots per inch). Such high quality can take time to print but you won't be sorry. Detail is sharp and the colour palette is natural thanks to the six-ink colour system. Draft mode printing is light with no banding issues, but should only be used if you want to save money. It's not a fast printer and, thankfully, Epson makes no wildly exaggerated page-per-minute claims.



5 HP DeskJet 5550

The 5550 is a mid-range printer with some good features and specifications. However, it's expensive to run and not comparably better. It's a shame this isn't a beauty contest because if it was the DeskJet 5550 would win hands down. HP tends to boast exaggerated print speeds and the 5550 is no exception. It's more than twice as slow as the claimed speeds and on the fastest print settings we could only push it to 7ppm (pages per minute) in colour and 5ppm in monochrome.

