

Inkjet Printer Buying Guide - Pros and Cons for the Consumer

Canon, Hewlett-Packard, Epson and Lexmark are responsible for the majority of inkjet printer sales and printer supplies in the global consumer market. If you have plans to buy an inkjet printer, this article will definitely help you in arriving at the right choice.

What are the different types of inkjet cheap printers available in the market?

Basic Inkjet Printers:

If you need to print web pages, spreadsheets and text documents, a basic inkjet printer that uses CMYK (cyan, magenta, yellow and key) or black ink will best suit your needs.

Inkjet Photo Printers:

To create higher-quality photo prints, use six-color inkjet photo printers with CMYK ink as well as light cyan and light magenta. Do you want to print photos directly from your digital camera? Go for inkjet photo printers with an LCD preview screen, PictBridge to transfer images directly from your digital camera over USB and media card slots compatible with the memory cards you use in your digital camera.

Portable Inkjet Printers:

You should select a printer that weighs less than 5 pounds if you travel a lot on business.

Inkjet Multifunction Printers:

This printer allows you to print, scan and copy, all at the touch of a button. However, you will have to compromise a little on quality. Printers with faxing capabilities are also available.

What is the maximum printing speed of an inkjet printer?

The speed of an inkjet printer is measured by the number of pages it can print per minute (ppm). A standard inkjet printer has three levels of quality settings: draft, normal and best. The speed decreases if you want high quality outputs. Manufacturers test the speed of a printer by printing basic text at the lowest quality setting. If you plan to print at normal quality settings, the real speed is likely to be about half the speed stated by the manufacturer.

If you often print graphics with your inkjet printer, speed is an important factor. Based on your printer's system configurations, print mode, page coverage, document complexity and software, print speeds vary. In a standard inkjet printer, print speed for black text differs between 1 to 28 ppm. For color photos and graphics, speeds range from 1 to 20 ppm.

What resolution is good for quality printing?

Another area you have to concentrate on is print resolution. Printers are identified as being of good quality if they feature print resolutions in excess of 1440 dots per inch (dpi). The maximum color resolution that an inkjet printer generally has is 2400 x 1200 dpi. Some high-end models have up to 4800 x 1200 dpi. Look for a resolution of at least 600 x 600 dpi for text printing and a minimum of 1200 x 600 dpi for graphics and photos. It is important to remember that the quality of output does not depend upon the resolution alone. It also depends upon the inkjet system used by the manufacturer and the colour management system.

In what way can memory capacity and memory card slots assist you?

Memory capacity should be a major factor when buying an inkjet printer because the built-in RAM cannot be expanded. You should check how much RAM is included with the printer you intend to buy. Basic models have 768 KB of RAM while the standard photo model comes with at least 8 MB of RAM for printing high-quality images.

Several inkjet printers feature memory card slots that support CompactFlash, Smart Media, Memory Stick, Secure Digital/MultiMedia Card and XD-Picture Card as well as other more advanced memory cards. Before buying a printer, confirm that it can read the memory cards that you already

own.

Are you looking for a printer to share?

If you want to share a printer with other computers over a home or business network, you should check to see whether it has a wired or wireless connection. Inkjet printers connect to your computer through a USB or FireWire (IEEE 1394) port. Today, many printers use Wi-Fi technology to print wirelessly. Some models of inkjet printers are network-ready right out of the box, while others come in standalone and network-ready versions. The most expensive option is an inkjet printer that supports a network add-on. However, this model may be more economical in the long run if you want to share the printer with other people.

What is the paper handling capacity of the printer?

The paper handling capacity should be of great concern to you if you print frequently or in bulk. In such cases, search for a printer that can hold a large quantity of paper at a time. Many inkjet printers have paper trays that take up to 250 sheets. Inkjet printers with ship paper trays can handle only 100 or 150 sheets and envelopes. Few business-oriented models feature an option of additional paper trays.

Which type of printer cartridge is better?

Every standard inkjet printer comes with four ink colors based on the CMYK color method. Normally, the cyan, magenta and yellow inks are packaged in individual containers within a single cartridge. A separate cartridge with black ink is also included.

Today, most professionals use three types of inks for their inkjet printers. Solvent inks are low in price and used for producing vehicle graphics, billboards and banners. UV-curable inks dry quickly and are mainly used for good images. For better color and durability, dye sublimation inks are preferred.

While purchasing an inkjet printer, find out which type of ink cartridges it takes and ensure that replacement of these cartridges is easy. Also check whether you can replace individual ink cartridges or you have to replace the entire bunch at once.

Which are the inexpensive head designs for inkjet printers?

Every inkjet printer has either a fixed or a disposable head design. The fixed head design is built-in and lasts for the entire life of the printer. Most inkjet heads feature micropiezo technology for precise dot placement. With this fixed design, you do not have to replace the head every time the ink runs out. The disposable head design comes with ink cartridges. You will have to replace both the cartridges and print head once the ink is exhausted.

What are the consumables in an inkjet printer?

Many models of inkjet printers have detachable drums, printer ink cartridges, developer units, fusers and a few other components which need occasional replacement. Combining all these consumables into one cartridge is the best approach. Replacing an integrated cartridge is less expensive when compared to the expense of replacing individual consumables at a time. But if one component fails in an integrated cartridge, then you have to replace the cartridge itself. Also, find out the cost for per-page printing as it differs among [cheap printers](#). The per-page printing cost can be calculated by dividing the price by the evaluated output of a cartridge.

If inkjet is not for you, consider laser printers.

About the Author

Bob Shanty has been researching and writing articles that help shoppers [shop online](#) and make more educated buying decisions on [cheap printers](#) for online mega store BIGshop for years. For more articles by Bob please visit <http://www.bigshop.com.au>.

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