

COMPUTER

NEWS AND NOTES

Six Easy Steps To Buying A Laser Printer

(NAPS)—A growing number of Americans have a personal computer (or two) in their home or small office. For many of these people, however, the question remains as to which printer makes sense for their specific setup.

A few years ago, inkjet printers were the only models most home users and small businesses even considered—largely because laser printers were too expensive. With advances in technology, though, users can now get all the advantages of a speedy laser printer for less than \$300.

Inkjets remain a smart choice for home users who need color or photo printing, but for mostly black-and-white, business-quality text and graphics printing, laser printers may make more sense. Here are a few steps to help ensure that you get a printer that's right for you:

Resolution: A critical criterion in choosing a laser printer is resolution. For the most professional-looking documents, you'll need a model, such as Lexmark's Optra E312L, that prints at least 1,200 dots per inch (dpi) Image Quality to produce crisp edges and well-formed graphics. The printer should also offer adjustable print resolution settings, such as draft or proof mode, which will allow you to use less ink and save costs.

Paper handling: If you've ever experienced a paper jam, you can attest to the importance of a reliable paper feeding system. As you compare laser printers, make sure they can handle a variety of paper types, from transparencies to envelopes to labels. Also ensure that it can handle a range of paper weights, from thin copy paper to heavy cardboard stock.

Duty cycle: A printer's duty cycle is an indicator of how many pages it can easily print in one month. Determine how much you think you will print in an average month and make sure your printer is suited for that volume level.



Laser printers are now a cost-efficient option for home or small office use.

Ease-of-use features: It's important to find a model that is easy to set up and use. Here are some key features:

1. The printer driver and operating panel should be straightforward and easy to understand.
2. The print cartridge should be one piece and easy to install.
3. The printer should be compact in size so that it doesn't waste your desk space.
4. The printer should come with a Universal Serial Bus (USB) port for easy installation.

Operating costs: Compare the prices and toner yields of supplies—and make sure you're comparing cartridges with comparable yields. One manufacturer may offer a lower price on its supplies but they may contain less toner, which may mean you're paying more in the long run.

Warranty and support: Make sure your printer comes with a good warranty (at least one year) and toll-free support.

When shopping for a printer, keep these features in mind and you should be able to maximize your money and purchase the right laser printer for your home or small business. For more information on printers, visit the Lexmark International Web site at www.lexmark.com.