

# Inkjets go to work

Is HP's **office inkjet** the best choice for your business?

**G**lobal changes in the financial climate are challenging businesses to become more cost-efficient. At the same time, global warming is pressuring them to lower their carbon footprint. While large-scale companies will always need heavy-duty machines, there are interesting developments for small companies and workgroups. The main choices have most recently been between single-function and all-in-one printers, and between laser and inkjet printing technology.

The advantages of an all-in-one printer are clear. An office-friendly model will typically deliver printing, scanning, photocopying and fax capabilities complete with an ADF (auto document feeder) for handling multipage input. Getting all of this functionality in one box means a lower manufacturing cost and fewer raw materials, resulting in a cheaper purchase price over buying several standalone devices. The device will also consume far less power than several machines, so all-in-ones are good for the wallet and the planet.

Some of the more advanced all-in-one business printers include auto duplex units as standard, so you can print double-sided multipage documents without having to turn the stack of printed pages over halfway through a print job and manually reinsert them back into the printer. This is an easy way of reducing your paper consumption by as much as half, further reducing your running costs and adding extra

eco-friendliness. The only real downside of an all-in-one printer is that if the machine breaks down, you lose all of your paper-based office functions in one fell swoop.

## Inkjet or laser?

The choice between inkjet and laser printing has turned into a long-running battle. Historically you were better off with a laser printer for crisp yet cheap mono output and an inkjet for producing full-colour pages. More recently, though, newer generations of compact colour laser printers have stormed the market, putting a big question mark over the suitability of inkjets for the office environment. Shared on a network between a group of users, it can often feel like inkjet printers are perpetually running out of ink due to the relatively small yield of their cartridges.

The current vogue for individual inkjet cartridges for each individual colour ink is intended to reduce running costs. In the busy workplace, however, this only exacerbates the problem, because one cartridge may need to be replaced within a matter of hours of another one.

True to recent form, the new Officejet Pro 8500 inkjet uses individual inks. Its optional 'XL' cartridges, though, are a revelation. They have sufficient capacity to output between three and four times as many pages per cartridge as the vast majority of other A4 inkjet printers on the market. This impressive capacity dramatically reduces the frequency with which you



have to replace the cartridge, and makes the 8500 a viable proposition for workgroup and network printing.

## It all adds up

A complete set of high-yield toner cartridges for a colour laser typically costs over £250, which is often nearly as much as the printer's original purchase price. By comparison, a full set of high-capacity 'XL' cartridges for the 8500 inkjet costs a much more affordable £60. While they only deliver half the page count of most laser cartridges, costs are effectively halved on a page-by-page basis.

Running costs are only half the story, however. Any all-in-one printer also needs to combine office tasks with speed, ease and efficiency. And, as our review below outlines, it's here that the Officejet Pro 8500 really comes into its own. ■

**Matthew Richards**

▲ **HP Officejet Pro 8500:** Low running costs combined with quality output make this a great option for the office.

## PRODUCT TEST

### HP Officejet Pro 8500

**Price** £225 (£196 ex VAT)  
**Supplier** www.misco.co.uk  
**Info** www.hp.com/uk  
**Warranty** One year

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The Officejet Pro 8500 combines a capacious 250-sheet input tray with an equally generous 50-sheet ADF (auto document feeder) for mono or colour scanning, faxing and photocopying. Standalone office duties are handled by simple onboard

controls and a wonderfully intuitive 8.76cm colour LCD touchscreen. Scanning quality is excellent and combines perfectly with the four-colour pigment ink system to create impressively crisp photocopies, and photo printing from a PC or the built-in multifunction card reader is surprisingly vibrant for a four-ink system.

Connection options include USB, PictBridge, Ethernet and wireless, the last of which is easy to set up direct from the printer itself. Document

printing is fast and efficient, with multipage print speeds of around 17ppm in normal quality mode, though photo printing in best quality mode is a little more pedestrian. ■

## PCPlus Verdict



Features ★★★★★  
Performance ★★★★★  
Value ★★★★★



### Key features

High-yield, low-cost cartridges, standalone fax with 50-sheet ADF, direct scanning to email or a network folder, simple onboard control with colour touchscreen LCD, auto duplex printing