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Epson targets the home with its latest projectors

New range aimed at the consumer

by Jamie Carter published on 29 August 2008

Epson has unleashed a clutch of new projectors for the home aimed at gamers, downloaders and those after HD movie perfection

Cleaning-up in the worlds of printers and business projectors isn't enough for Epson, so the Japanese brand has started an assault on the home market with six new projectors with very different consumers in mind.

Pocket-lint was given special access to Epson's facilities in Shenzhen, China and at its headquarters in Matsumoto, Japan to see its latest new range of 3LCD projectors for the home.

Aimed squarely at those who have been put off projectors because of tricky set-up and the lack of sound, Epson's EH-DM2 and EH-TW420 3LCD projectors cover all the bases but also keep things simple.

About to sell for just £500, Epson's EH-DM2 is an all-in-one projector in a unit that also contains a DVD player and rudimentary speakers.

Primarily aimed at use with DVDs and the Nintendo Wii (for which it offers 1:1 pixel mapping from its non-HD 480p resolution), the EH-DM2 has a game mode to speed-up the response time and reduce blur.

Armed with a built-in CD/DVD player and two 8W speakers, it can play audio CDs and MP3 files with its lamp switched-off, the latter either from CDs or a USB stick.

That USB slot can also take a memory stick full of JPEG photos and turn them into slideshows, with various transition effects possible from the remote control. The DVD player can also play DivX files



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With a carry handle built-in and a fabric case, the EH-DM2 is thoroughly portable: "you can even take it camping" said one Epson representative. It also features an idiot-proof one-cable set-up.

High-def gaming is the bonus feature on the Epson's EH-TW420, which will sell in September for around £650. Armed with a single HDMI input, component video and 720p resolution, it's targeted at the PlayStation 3 and Xbox 360 and resembles a more normal projector, though its 2000 ANSI lumens brightness also allows it to be used in daylight.

With a Game mode as well as a self-explanatory DarkWall option, the EH-TW420 boasts a couple of 7W speakers, a USB port and a SD card slot for playing photo slideshows.

Despite the headline-grabbing one-box projectors, the message from its dedicated home cinema line-up is that Epson thinks that Full HD resolution is the only way to go.

Most impressive is its flagship EH-TW5000, a £2399 projector available in October and aimed at high-grade home cinemas. As well as being black on the outside, the Full HD 1080p EH-TW5000 3LCD projector is designed to recreate pure black onscreen. Its dynamic contrast ratio of 75,000:1 and all-new DeepBlack technology looked impressive in demos, easily outclassing some other big names in home cinema projection. Its also enjoys ISF certification so can be tuned exactly to a user's requirements, though pre-loaded picture modes are also supplied.

Just below the EH-TW5000 is the white/silver EH-TW3800, a £2000 model for October with a contrast ratio of 20,000:1, two HDMI inputs, 10-bit colour processing and ISF certification. Next comes the white £1300 EH-TW3000, which will also go on sale in October and boasts similarly essential features, but uses a less expensive

lens.

In another move to persuade consumers that home cinema projection need not be expensive, all of its new models come with a 3-year product and lamp warranty.

Each also enjoys a 2.1 optical zoom and horizontal/vertical lens shift, which makes it possible to put the projector off-centre to where you want to project an image.