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HP Photosmart A626 compact photo printer

The compact printer to have or one to forget?

by Stuart Miles published on 13 December 2007

The HP Photosmart A626 Compact Photo Printer is designed for those on the go, but is it any good? We get printing to find out.

The A626 replaces the 400 series which previously replaced the 300 series and offers HP's now standard toaster design.

The black, rather than grey model of previous versions, features a compact design, a 4.8-inch colour touchscreen, room for an optional battery, a memory card reader and the ability to print borderless images up to 18 x 13cm (7 x 5 inch).

The memory card reader supports xD, CompactFlash, MemoryStick and MemoryStick Duo and of course SD. Additionally there is a USB port for printing directly from a camera via PictBridge.

Around the back and there is a USB printer port so you can connect it to your computer. In fact the only button on the device is an on/off switch tucked on the top next to the screen.

The lack of physical buttons is thanks to the touchscreen display, however those slightly worried by this shouldn't be. Once sprung into action, like HP's A826, there are six "soft" buttons, three on either side of the screen and these allow you to scroll through images, print, go select the menu, go back a step and a delete key.

The buttons aren't the only touchscreen element though and when it comes to editing images you have full control.

Slam a memory card in and you are presented with a gallery of all the images that are on it. From



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here you can then zoom in for a closer look or select to print from the gallery display.

Zooming in gives you the chance to "Edit Photo" or "Get Creative". Editing the photo gives you crop, red-eye removal and photo brightness controls while "Get Creative" gives you stuff like adding frames, captions, drawing on the image or changing the colour all without the need of a computer.

Once your images have been edited and then selected its just a case of press the print screen and waiting for the prints to come out.

The A626 can hold up to 20 sheets at a time, although annoyingly you'll only get ink for around 15 prints to begin with. You'll get even less paper - just 3 sheets.

When it comes to printing, this isn't the fastest printer around. Print speeds start at around 85 seconds for a 6 x 4-inch print and go up to around 125 seconds for a 7 x 5-inch print. However the results are worth the wait with good balance of colour and smudge proof by the time they come out onto the paper tray.

The printer also comes with an optional Bluetooth wireless adapter so you can print directly from your mobile phone if it supports it.

VERDICT

Like the A826, the HP Photosmart A626 sells itself on being a portable printer that allows you to print anywhere you are.

While the print quality is very good and the overall package easy to use, there are a lot of extras to buy after you've spent your £99.

You'll need a printer cable to connect to the PC, printer paper, ink, and a battery to make it portable. It all adds up.

Good, but bear in mind the extras will have you'll

At a glance

What is it?

Compact Photo Printer

Good

Compact, good prints, easy to use

Bad

No cable, no ink, no paper, and no battery in the box, not the fastest printer on the block

Verdict

Good, but bear in mind the extras will have you'll spending more than that magical £100 price tag

Price £117

Our score

7/10

Your score

?/10

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