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HP Photosmart C6280 All-in-One printer

Can HP outperform the competition with this All-in-One printer?

by Stuart Miles published on 17 December 2007

The HP Photosmart C6280 is the company's mid-range All-in-One printer aimed at photo enthusiasts and small offices / home office workers up and down the country. But is it any good? We get printing to find out.

So what do you get for your outlay? On the printer front you get the promise of being able to print up to 32ppm black, and colour at speeds of 24ppm, while the scanner offers 4800 x 4800 dpi. You also get a memory card reader. You don't however get Wi-Fi just Ethernet, direct CD or DVD printing or a feed tray at the top, you also don't get direct printing from a camera via a USB cable.

Those thinking that this is the upgrade from the C6180 announced in 2006 will be disappointed, in fact, it's actually a downgrade with the C7280 taking over that mantle, which all-in-all makes this model a little confused of where it should sit in the older range.

Quibbles about the name aside, the not so compact printer is controlled via a plethora of buttons along the front and via the 2.4-inch screen to the left of the scanner.

Out of the box and setup is easy. After loading the six ink cartridges; Black, Yellow, Light Blue, Blue, Pink and Magenta rather than just the standard Black, Yellow, Cyan and Magenta you have the option of printing via the computer (both PC and Mac) or via the memory card which supports xD, CompactFlash, MemoryStick and MemoryStick Duo and of course SD formats. However there is no USB port for printing directly from a camera via PictBridge.

Like other printers in the HP range, the HP C6280



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offers printing direct from the device rather than having to connect to a printer and the on-screen interface, which is controlled via the d-pad below the screen, allows you to choose a number of options from the size of the print to the paper that you are printing on.

The interface is the same as other printers from HP and is overall easy to use and straight forward to understand. Printing images for example you can view images on the memory card, select the ones you want and then change the printer settings according. Frustratingly however you can't opt for different print sizes within the same batch. So if you are after one image 6 x 4-inches and another A4 then you'll have to print them separately.

Print quality is very good thanks to the six ink set. Colours were well balanced and skin tones reproduced to a high standard. Resolution capabilities of the C6280 is up to 4800 x 1200 optimised dpi colour when printing from a computer and 1200 input dpi from a memory card.

Above the three printers in the range below this, the C6280 does feature a 6 x 4-inch automated photo tray saving you having to load photo paper all the time if you've been printing documents for most of the day.

Other photo features include Red Eye Removal and the ability to print album pages, panorama prints, passport photos and wallet photos without the need for a computer.

As print speeds, on standard default settings the C6280 performs well. straightforward document printing was very fast and it took 40 seconds to print a borderless 6 x 4-inch photo from a memory card. Likewise full page colour photo printing on the default settings is very fast with a page printed in under 2 minutes.

When it comes to scanning the printer offers up to

At a glance

What is it?

Mid range All-in-one printer

Good

Print quality, memory card reader, six inks

Bad

No Wi-Fi, scanner flatbed awkward to use

Verdict

At £199 the C6280 is more expensive than its older C6180 but disappointingly doesn't come with as many features

Price £249

Our score

7/10

Your score

?/10

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4800 x 4800 dpi via hardware with no additional scope within the software.

Lifting the scanner lid on the top of the device reveals an A4 tray from which to scan documents from. The top lid can't be removed however making it difficult if you are scanning a book and due to the design the scanner bed is actually dipped lower than the casing surrounding it making it doubly hard to scan anything that isn't flat or smaller than A4.

The scanning process is easy and you can scan directly to the computer or memory card.

The ability to scan to a memory card in the printer again negates the need for a computer although the only catch however is that you don't have control over the scanner's settings for this option. You can of course scan directly to your PC or Mac if you want where you do get full control through the software suite.

Software included in the box is minimal, basically just the HP's Photosmart Essential Software, but this is enough to get you started on the printing front.

VERDICT

At £199 the C6280 is more expensive than its older C6180 but disappointingly doesn't come with as many features. The lack of Wi-Fi is a very strange omission for a business printer, as is the document feeder on the top for scanning multiple pages. We've also got grumbles over the scanner bed.

However what we aren't complaining about is the print quality, which in our tests was very good and prints came out smudge free very quickly.

So why aren't we telling you to go out and buy it? Well because there are too many grumbles, this is HP creating a model not because it meets a need, but because it allows it to say that it has 6 printers in the All-in-One range. If you must go

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with HP then look to spend the £50 extra and get the C7280 complete with its wireless connectivity and document feeder. Otherwise look elsewhere.