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Lexmark X4650 all-in-one printer

Your wireless home office solution?

by Chris Hall published on 4 July 2008

The Lexmark X4650 comes in towards the top of Lexmark's range of home office printers, with the suggestion that it will accommodate the needs of students, before you get into some of the more serious beasts. But will this solve all your home printing needs?

The X4650 features both the colour ink jet printer and a flatbed scanner, that will handle up to A4 size, so has a medium-sized footprint, measuring 45.9 x 33.1cm (without the paper tray extended, while it stands 17.5cm high, including the paper feed tray, which will take 100 pages of 80gsm paper.

The large size of the printer is due to the included scanner, and lifting the lid to access the print cartridges confirms that most of the body is an empty box. On the front you'll also find a card reader that can accept all the normal card formats, including CompactFlash, MMC, SD, SDHC, XD-Picture Card and so on. You will also find connection for PictBridge, for use with compatible cameras.

Installation is well-guided by the supplied CD, including the steps needed to ready the printer, including removing packaging, installing print cartridges and so on, so if you are not familiar with printers you should have no problems. The same wizard also continues to allow you to connect the printer to the network using Wi-Fi, although you do need to use the enclosed USB cable to do this. It was a simple process with easy to follow steps, and we found it was simply a case of selecting our network and tapping in the password - thereafter there were no connection problems.

However, we did experience some serious problems installing the software on our regular test PC, to the point of failure. The installation crashed the PC at every installation and was



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never successful, so we had to install the printer on a different machine. This problem has still not been resolved, but we feel it important to say that whilst installation was simple on one PC, it utterly failed on another.

The installation is a little large (96MB without extras) as it wants to include a whole range of functions - you get the option to install a plug-in for Office 2007, as well as a web toolbar and so on, which, whilst providing short direct links to printing options, does bloat things out. One element you don't get an option over is Fast Pics, which becomes part of start-up too, creating a degree of lag, and you'll find most of the options available as part of XP anyway.

Wi-Fi is a refreshing addition to a printer, and one worth having if you are a notebook user as this removes the ties from your desk. You can also then share the printer so that other people in your house or small office can print to it over the wireless network. The Wi-Fi logo on the front doubles up as an indicator light letting you know that your printer is connected to the network.

As a printer we found the print times were reasonable, with an A4 black and white text page taking approx 23 seconds from the printer feeding the paper to having finished, however, using the wireless option means that it takes approximately 20 seconds extra from pressing the print button in Word. The speeds vary depending on settings, and whilst this isn't the fastest printer, it is adequate for home printing.

On the top of the printer you will find an OLED display and various control buttons, allowing you to make various selections at the printer. This includes options for scanning, as well as direct control of the memory card reader. Press the photo button and insert a card and you can then print the photos off directly. Options are limited: you get to select the paper size, the print size, which of the photos you want, either "last" or all, or select by number, but with no preview screen

At a glance

What is it?

All-in-one printer with Wi-Fi

Good

Wi-Fi connection, guided installation program, scan to memory card, borderless printing, PictBridge

Bad

Large install, install failures, printing from memory card a bit limited

Verdict

Overall we were very impressed with the performance of the Lexmark X4650, but we couldn't install it over repeated attempts on one of our normal PCs, which is a problem

Price £129.99

Our score

6/10

Your score

?/10

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you can't see what you are doing, so unless you are organised, you'll be better off using a computer.

However, the printing results are impressive, with full page borderless prints, providing plenty of colour without too much striping or bleed. The best results are obtained on the best paper, of course, but even on cheaper photo paper we found the ink took well, which is sometimes a problem (as long as you avoid touching the face of the paper). A full page photo print from card takes several minutes, but is pretty solid result.

The copy function allows you to use the scanner and printer together as a basic photocopier, with reduction and enlargement options. The scanner will try to detect the size and is easily confused by A4 pages with white space, such as borders, so it is worth selecting the original size yourself. The same applies to the dedicated scanner features, but you get the option to save to the network, where you can select the destination computer, or, cleverly, to a memory card or USB drive connected directly to the printer.

VERDICT

Overall we were impressed with the performance of the Lexmark X4650. It provides all the features that a small home office might require (it also comes with Lexmark fax software) and the print and scan performance is adequate, with impressive results in the photo printing. The card reader, whilst not great because of the absence of a preview screen, does give you extra flexibility to scan and save documents to be directly portable, plus gives you to option of PC free printing, either through PictBridge, or direct from the card.

The only problem we have is that we couldn't install it over repeated attempts on one of our normal PCs, with the computer crashing on every attempt, and there was no option for "drivers only" installation. This ultimately brings the score down from what is otherwise a good performing printer.