

Photo Printers

If you read my article “42 Pictures of My Dog” back in one of the June columns then you know that my wife and I bought a Fuji FinePix A330 digital camera. We have been using it for months now and just absolutely love it! It is by far one of the simplest cameras to operate with superior output quality. Over the last couple of months we have taken over a thousand shots that are all stored on our computers hard drive. We are now wanting to explore our options as to what to do with these photos. Obviously we will never print every photo, but certainly there are numerous shots we would like to print out and memorialize on our refrigerator.

As a computer guy my first assumption is that we needed to buy some sort of photo printer. After doing some research I found that “photo” printers come in two flavors. Ink Jet Photo printers are typically a dual-purpose printer that will function well while printing photos and have excellent output and speed while performing standard office functions. Another type of printer is known as a Dedicated Photo Printer. These printers only function is to print 4x6 or 5x7 glossy photos depending on the model.

I found that there is really not much difference in specifications when comparing Inkjet Photo Printers. Practically all of the photo printers have a maximum output of 1200x4800 dpi. The difference between a \$50 and \$300 printer had more to do with the printer’s speed and features, not image quality. Some things to consider when buying an inkjet printer have to do with the ability to print straight from the camera to the printer, or having a card reader available to read your memory card. Another feature to be aware of is the number of ink tanks a particular printer has. Most printers come with a tri-color ink tank and a black tank, however you may find it more convenient to use a printer that contains an individual tank for each color. In order to get the best output from Inkjet Photo Printers it is important to stay with the manufacturer’s recommended replacement ink and paper.

Dedicated Photo printers are typically built around a thermal dye technology other than the more common inkjet technology. Their price starts out at around \$150. Thermal dye works better than inkjet technology because each of the common colors, cyan, yellow, and magenta can be printed in 256 different shades. As opposed to inkjet where the colors have to be mixed in order to achieve the same effect. Most Dedicated Photo Printers will only print to certain size paper though, such as 4x6. The output of these printers are more photo like in their feel and look due to the way the dye transfers to the paper. Also, because each photo takes up a predetermined amount of dye it is easier to determine how much each photo will cost you to print. Which by the way is about twice as much as having it printed at a photo shop.

Another option for the do-it-yourself photo printer is to use one of the online photo finishers. Simply upload your pictures to their servers, choose the size and finish and in a matter of days they will be mailed to you.

No matter which method you choose to print your valuable photos be sure to take the all important step of backing up the original files so that you can easily make copies of the originals in the years to come. If you have any computer related questions feel free to contact Thomas, Roger or Justin at the Computer Depot, or e-mail Thomas at computerdepotonline@att.net.