



SNAPSHOT: Although not the fastest printer we tested, the R390's vibrant print quality, array of features and ease-of-use saw it crowned Editors' Choice.



Epson Photo R390

EPSON'S R390 is a photo printer aimed squarely at users with an interest in photography and high quality home printing. At \$299 it's the most expensive printer we tested, but the print quality and ease of use should make it a user favourite.

Setting up the printer was a breeze; the provided software from Epson is intuitive and easy to use. Installing the six ink cartridges was trouble free. A large colour LCD screen on the front of the printer also helps guide users through the setup process in a few simple steps.

The only complaint I have about the setup process is that the myriad of applications are installed without explaining which one does what. While the printer has some advanced features, most users will never touch half of the applications installed. Two examples of software I'd like to see as an optional download rather than being on the CD are Epson's Web to Page and Attach to Email application. Once set up properly though, using the provided software was hassle free.

We put the R390 through its paces, and it surprised us with some brilliant results. While its print speeds are on the slow side compared to its competitors, the 390's print quality makes up for it. Even difficult pictures with dark segments in them came out clear, with good colour matching, quality and balance. Full A4 prints came out vibrant and true to the original photo.

The quality continued to be excellent on black and white text prints, with sharp text and no over-inking, but we were a little disappointed in how slowly the 390 achieved that quality, taking almost three minutes to print out ten pages. This time was dramatically reduced when we knocked the settings right down, but we wouldn't recommend the 390 for someone producing a lot of text pages daily.

The printer's LCD screen came in very handy when we printed directly from a memory card. The card reader supports CompactFlash, Sony Memory Sticks, Microdrive, SD, MultiMediaCard, miniSD

Card (with adapter) and xD-Picture. In addition to the card reader, users can also take advantage of the in-built PictBridge, a technology allowing you to print directly from your camera. Selecting which photos to print using the screen was also straightforward, and would work well for people in a hurry, or even people without a PC. Using a Bluetooth USB adapter (not included and not tested), you can also print pictures wirelessly.

Epson says the R390 also supports printing from Sony's Playstation 3 through inserted media. It also has the ability to print on compatible CDs or DVDs, through a plate you insert at the bottom paper tray.

The R390 earns our coveted Editors' Choice Award for its quality. Although there are some improvements we'd like to see in the next generation, Epson has got its pedigree right for home users looking for high quality photo prints.

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