

New Zealand

# PC WORLD



## Epson RX530



Epson's \$379 RX530 had the best-designed control panel of all the printers here. Someone at Epson has obviously taken a good hard look at what people do most often with these devices, and then given them quick access to those features. Three buttons toggle between copy, memory card and film/photo modes, with additional presses of the button quickly switching between common choices, such as fit-to-page or 100% for the copy function. On the other side of the LCD are two buttons: one toggles between matte, photo or plain paper while the second switches between 13 x 18cm, 10 x 15cm or A4 paper sizes. This set of controls means you can set the most often-used options in a jiffy without delving into menu screens, although you still need to use the LCD to set quality and number-of-print options.

The RX530 is also a four-colour printer but comes with separate ink cartridges for each colour, thus improving economy. There is a card reader at the front, which supports CompactFlash, SD, MM, Smart Media, xd-Picture, Memory Stick and Memory Stick Pro, plus Duo and Pro Duo and MiniSD cards with adapters. You can also connect a camera for direct printing. The RX530 has a holder that lets you scan 35mm slides or film strips, a welcome addition if you want to digitise your old photos.

The RX530's plain-paper performance was good. Its colour copies were more vibrant than those from the MP450, but it lost more detail in dark areas of colour



than the MP450 did. Its standard-quality monochrome copies didn't produce black tones as crisply as the OfficeJet 5610 or MP450, and text was more feathered at the edges. It did a better job than the MP450 in the 10 x 15cm print test, with better shadow detail overall and less images that required individual adjustment to get a better result. Its A4 borderless print from Photoshop was also very good although the MP450 did a slightly better job at areas of fine detail.

In terms of print speed, it was the best of the budget models. Its high-quality A4

photo print took 2 minutes 46 seconds; its 10 x 15cm print just 1 minute 36 seconds. It was faster at colour plain-paper prints than the other budget models but slightly slower at monochrome prints.

With its individual ink cartridges, good print quality and speed, and the bonus feature of slide and film scanning, the Epson RX530 gets our Editors' Choice for budget all-in-ones. If slide and film scanning isn't your thing, you don't mind waiting for photo prints and you'd like to integrate a fax machine into your all-in-one device, the OfficeJet 5610 will suit you better.