



COMPETENT BUT COMPLICATED:
The Epson makes a great job of prints but wireless setup is overly complex.

EPSON Stylus Photo TX710W

EPSON'S TX710W is a sizable and well put together multifunction photo printer. Its gloss black finish, silver highlights and flashing blue LED strip ensure that it's the best looking of the three units in the test, if that's an important consideration for you.

The TX710W has a 2.5 inch LCD screen to allow access to setup, diagnostics, scanning, copying and the like. The screen is smaller than the HP's and isn't touch enabled but it swivels (along with the control panel) to allow it to be clearly seen when the printer is placed on a desk. Connectivity includes wireless, USB, PictBridge, Ethernet and two memory card slots, one of which accepts Compact Flash cards, which will be appreciated by users of older or high-end DSLRs. There's also an optional Bluetooth adapter available.

Unfortunately, setup was a frustrating process. Epson's software loaded easily but connecting the TX710W to the wireless network and getting any computer on the network to see the printer was an exercise in futility. I'm convinced this wasn't due to anything on my side, because two other reviewers I know have had similar issues with Epson printers in this series. Moving to a USB cable had the TX710W humming along in no time at all. The software suite isn't as visually slick as HP's software but it includes

no less than fourteen applications covering everything from colour profiles to optical character recognition. The Easy PhotoPrint image editing and print application offers a surprising amount of control over images.

The TX710W is a six colour printer with light magenta and light cyan alongside black, yellow, cyan and magenta cartridges. Like the other two units in the test, the Epson has separate plain and photo paper feeds, contained in one ingenious albeit fiddly tray. DVD/CD printing is also on offer.

The frugal Epson was the polar opposite of the HP in terms of ink consumption. It arrived with an almost empty cyan cartridge, which needed to be run dry. After printing twenty-four 4 x 6 inch photos with four A4s thrown in for good measure, the Epson was indicating that the cartridge was very low but it was still happily printing everything I sent at it. The other cartridges were showing only moderate ink use. When a cartridge does run out however, the TX710W gets irritatingly insistent about buying Epson ink online.

Using Epson Ultra Glossy photo paper, the TX710W's photo print quality was the best in the test by a small margin, with the highest levels of sharpness and detail retention. Colours were well saturated and contrast high but prints weren't quite as vivid as the HP.

Extra saturation and contrast can be dialled in via the software but the results can be a little hit and miss, with some prints ending up with too much contrast. It's definitely worth experimenting with the options in the print dialogue boxes. Monochrome photos had a moderate cold-blue tint to them, while black and white text output didn't match the sharpness of the other printers.

Epson's TX710W is a very competent photo printer, with much to recommend it. On the other hand, it's the most expensive printer on test and buyers are paying for wireless connectivity. If it wasn't for the apparent problem with the wireless setup, it would have scored higher than it did.

AT A GLANCE

- Frustrating Wi-Fi setup.
- Good ink-cartridge life.
- Competent but pricey.

EPSON STYLUS PHOTO TX710W

RRP incl GST: \$399 Contact: epson.co.nz

A good-looking and very effective multifunction photo printer but the wireless setup problems are a concern.

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