

TOP 10 PRINTERS

TOP 100

TEST Center

★ Products in this chart are ranked by star rating. Visit find.pcworld.com/46152 for reviews of all products tested this month and ranked in this chart.

THIS MONTH'S CHART consists entirely of a crop of newly tested color lasers. We divided the printers into two price-related categories: small-office (\$1000 or less) and corporate (above \$1000). At the low extreme is Dell's 3000cn, our small-office Best Buy, priced at an amazing \$449; at the other end is Xerox's \$3899 Phaser 7300N, the corporate model that earned the highest star rating.

The two Dell models we tested were excellent small-office performers. The 3000cn captured our Best Buy award thanks to its affordable price and great-looking text. The \$999 5100cn took the top spot in our rankings, however, due to its speed, better paper-

handling options, and support for Windows, Mac, and Linux.

In the corporate category, we were impressed with the Xerox Phaser 7300N's speed, excellent text, and detailed graphics, but its hefty price reserves it for offices with healthy IT budgets. Our Best Buy in this group is Lexmark's C762n, whose print quality rivaled that of the Xerox.



Lexmark C762n

Three printers we looked at did not enter our Top 10: Lexmark's C510n, a \$999 model that fell down on print quality; the Xerox Phaser 8400N, a \$1299 printer that underwhelmed us on both speed and print quality; and the Okidata C5400N, a \$1099 unit that was too slow to make the cut.

	SMALL-OFFICE	Features and specifications	Performance	Bottom line	
1	Dell 5100cn \$999 (★★★★★) find.pcworld.com/45960	• Rated 35 ppm black, 25 ppm color • 600-by-600-dpi maximum true color resolution	• Paper sizes up to legal • 650 sheets input; 2 trays standard, 5 trays maximum	Text quality: Good Color graphics quality: Good Speed: 21.1 ppm text, 6.1 ppm graphics	This workhorse has a built-in duplexer and can expand with optional high-capacity paper trays. Print quality could be better.
2	Dell 3000cn Best Buy \$449 (★★★★★) find.pcworld.com/45974	• Rated 25 ppm black, 5 ppm color • 600-by-600-dpi maximum true color resolution	• Paper sizes up to legal • 150 sheets input; 1 tray standard, 3 trays maximum	Text quality: Outstanding Color graphics quality: Good Speed: 17.9 ppm text, 3.4 ppm graphics	Printer delivered excellent-quality text and solid graphics printing in a small footprint—and at a bargain price, too.
3	HP LaserJet 3550n \$999 (★★★★★) find.pcworld.com/45964	• Rated 16 ppm black, 16 ppm color • 600-by-600-dpi maximum true color resolution	• Paper sizes up to legal • 350 sheets input; 2 trays standard, 3 trays maximum	Text quality: Very Good Color graphics quality: Fair Speed: 10.5 ppm text, 3.9 ppm graphics	Bulky model relies on an external print server for networking, but produced sharp text and line art.
4	HP LaserJet 2550L \$499 (★★★★★) find.pcworld.com/45962	• Rated 20 ppm black, 4 ppm color • 600-by-600-dpi maximum true color resolution	• Paper sizes up to legal • 125 sheets input; 1 tray standard, 3 trays maximum	Text quality: Fair Color graphics quality: Good Speed: 8.6 ppm text, 1.1 ppm graphics	This very compact model lacks integrated networking and compromises on paper handling. Print quality was moderate.
5	Konica Minolta MagiColor 5430L \$999 (★★★★★) find.pcworld.com/45978	• Rated 21 ppm black, 21 ppm color • 600-by-600-dpi maximum true color resolution	• Paper sizes up to legal • 250 sheets input; 1 tray standard, 3 trays maximum	Text quality: Very Good Color graphics quality: Fair Speed: 3.0 ppm text, 2.4 ppm graphics	An average product all around, this unit came in last in our performance tests. It has good paper-handling features, though.
6	Brother HL-2700CN \$599 (★★★★★) find.pcworld.com/45958	• Rated 31 ppm black, 8 ppm color • 600-by-600-dpi maximum true color resolution	• Paper sizes up to legal • 250 sheets input; 1 tray standard, 1 tray maximum	Text quality: Fair Color graphics quality: Poor Speed: 18.7 ppm text, 3.1 ppm graphics	We saw acceptable line art, but fuzzy text and overly dark graphics, from this compact color printer. Text printing was fast.
CORPORATE					
1	Xerox Phaser 7300N \$3899 (★★★★★) find.pcworld.com/45976	• Rated 37 ppm black, 30 ppm color • 600-by-600-dpi maximum true color resolution	• Paper sizes up to banner • 650 sheets input; 2 trays standard, 6 trays maximum	Text quality: Outstanding Color graphics quality: Good Speed: 24.5 ppm text, 5.5 ppm graphics	The priciest printer here was the fastest at text and near the top of the heap for graphics printing. Has a built-in print server.
2	HP Color LaserJet 5550n \$3549 (★★★★★) find.pcworld.com/45968	• Rated 27 ppm black, 27 ppm color • 600-by-600-dpi maximum true color resolution	• Paper sizes up to tabloid • 600 sheets input; 2 trays standard, 5 trays maximum	Text quality: Outstanding Color graphics quality: Very Good Speed: 16.5 ppm text, 5.6 ppm graphics	This fast graphics printer issued good-looking output almost across the board, but printed text at only an average speed.
3	Lexmark C762n Best Buy \$1869 (★★★★★) find.pcworld.com/45982	• Rated 25 ppm black, 25 ppm color • 1200-by-1200-dpi maximum true color resolution	• Paper sizes up to banner • 600 sheets input; 1 tray standard, 3 trays maximum	Text quality: Outstanding Color graphics quality: Good Speed: 16.1 ppm text, 4.9 ppm graphics	Lexmark offers wired and wireless print servers for this model, which generated sharp, dark text but garishly colored images.
4	Okidata C7350n \$1984 (★★★★★) find.pcworld.com/45980	• Rated 26 ppm black, 24 ppm color • 1200-by-600-dpi maximum true color resolution	• Paper sizes up to banner • 630 sheets input; 2 trays standard, 4 trays maximum	Text quality: Outstanding Color graphics quality: Very Good Speed: 20.4 ppm text, 2.4 ppm graphics	With its fairly compact size and fast text printing, this unit is a good choice for a workgroup that prints mostly documents.

HOW WE TEST: We run time tests for text, line-art, and color and gray-scale photo samples (at normal quality settings on plain paper); then a panel of judges rates image quality. Data based on tests designed and conducted by the PC World Test Center. All rights reserved. **CHART NOTES:** Prices given are street prices as of 11/18/04. All street prices are for a standard printer configuration, including a network interface for the printer (unless otherwise noted). Price is taken into consideration for Best Buy honors only. Star ratings are based on print quality, features, ease of use, speed, and service and support. See find.pcworld.com/10860 for details on PC World's Star Ratings.