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▼ The Epson EMP-1710 features an astonishingly quick, three-second shutdown time.



Epson EMP-1710

THIS BRAND-NEW PROJECTOR IS EXPENSIVE AND RATHER NOISY, BUT IMAGE QUALITY IS EXCELLENT.

Epson's LCD-based EMP-1710 offers a level of sophistication often missing from ultraportable projectors. But, with a 1.6kg weight, you clearly pay for this in terms of size and bulk.

Instead of elementary colour temperature options such as low, medium and high, it has a full range of 10 settings from 5000K to 10,000K. Security options can lock all the projector's buttons to prevent tampering, and as an extra precaution password settings don't even appear in the standard menu – you press "freeze" on the remote for five seconds to access them.

The real highlight is the super-high brightness rating. At 2700 ANSI lumens, it's theoretically 35% brighter than its nearest competitor. In reality, it didn't appear unusually bright in testing, and if you use maximum brightness images look washed out. The default brightness is "low", which equates to eco mode. Most projectors default to maximum brightness, but in the EMP-1710 it's welcome to extend lamp life, since the \$505 replacement lamp equates to a running cost of 25c per hour (dropping to 17c in eco mode).

LCD technology requires more cooling than DLP. At default settings, the Epson is noisy (at 44dBA) but acceptable. However, remember this is eco mode: at full brightness it's the loudest here with a distracting 50dBA.

In return, though, it delivers the best image quality on test. Subtle colour differences are reproduced more clearly than with other projectors. Focus is superb across the entire screen and LCD's better colour

characteristics make images more punchy. We also noticed comparatively more detail in shadowy areas. Its weakness, of course, is LCD's low contrast ratio (400:1), so a pure black screen looks grey next to the best DLP machines. For widescreen videos, it means rich, vibrant colours and good detail in dark areas, but with visible grey bars above and below the image.

The EMP-1710 is also well designed, with a neat sliding lens door doubling as a picture/sound mute switch. Many will also appreciate the three-second shutdown time, while the remote gives you plenty of options including mouse control. Epson's three-year, on-site, next-business-day warranty is also welcome.

Although the price will put the Epson out of reach for some, it's a brand-new model and prices should drop over the next few months. It may be noisy at full brightness, but it's redeemed by the superior image quality.

IMAGE QUALITY**QUIETNESS****FEATURES & DESIGN****OVERALL**