



CONTACT

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SPECIFICATIONS

PROJECTION SYSTEM:

RGB LCD (x3)

BRIGHTNESS: 1800/1500

ANSI lumens (High/Low Brightness mode)

CONTRAST RATIO: 500:1

NATIVE RESOLUTION:

800 x 600 (SVGA)

SCREEN SIZE: (Projected

Distance) 1.19 to 12.12m

(Zoom: Tele), 0.87 to 8.97m

(Zoom: Wide)

SOUND OUTPUT:

1W Mono

PROJECTION METHOD:

Front, rear, ceiling mount

VERTICAL KEYSTONE

CORRECTION:

-30 to +30 degrees

INPUTS: S-video, PC,

Composite video and audio

OUTPUTS: PC Monitor Out

and USB

POWER CONSUMPTION:

Lamp On: 240-250W,

Lamp Off: 5-6W

DIMENSIONS: (WxDxH)

327 x 247 x 99mm

WEIGHT: 2.6kg

FAN NOISE:

Low Brightness: 30dB,

High Brightness: 36dB

PROS

- ✦ Huge, bright display
- ✦ Connects to all commonly used office and home devices

CONS

- ✖ Resolution and contrast is on the low end

VERDICT

It won't let you down in the office and it will wow you at home

Aesthetics	92%
Performance	90%
Features	95%
Functionality	98%
Price Value	96%
Overall	



Volksprojector

EPSON EMP S4 \$1299

The Epson EMP S4 is the projector that a lot of people have been waiting for. It's an affordably priced, entry-level model and yet it delivers a viewing experience that would shame many, much higher-priced projectors.

The S4 has been designed to easily hook up to a laptop computer, DVD or VCR player, TV, low-end home theatre system or a games console. While it might not deliver the best available screen resolution and it lacks some mod cons like an HDMI socket, it chucks out a big, bright image. It's very good at working with the technology that you are likely to have knocking around today.

When I connected the S4 to an Xbox, the console plugged straight into the projector's audio-video socket. Thanks to the S4's built-in mono sound system there was no need to involve another device (such as a TV) to provide the sound.

The S4 projected an Xbox screen that took up the whole wall in a moderately sized bedroom. This was roughly equivalent to a 120-inch diagonal display with a projection distance of roughly four metres. Even with some indirect sunlight, the screen was reasonably bright at this size. At night it looked like a giant plasma screen.

The S4 is easy to move from room to room because it powers down almost instantly and weighs only 2.6kg. In smaller rooms the display can be a bit too large at first, but trust me, that's a nice problem to have with a projector. You can solve it easily by using the electronic zoom or moving the projector closer to the wall.

If you move the projector closer to the wall you end up with a smaller, but brighter display, which is just what you want in office or classroom situations. If the projector is a couple of metres away from the wall, you end up with a 40-inch to 50-inch display that's clearly viewable in just about any lighting conditions.

Other features that office users will find welcoming include a presentation-friendly remote control and a manual lens shutter that ends

a presentation instantly, while muting the speaker.

The S4 only begins to reflect its price tag when you hook it up to a DVD player to watch a movie. For hardened home theatre buffs, the contrast ratio of 500:1 is on the low side. I found that black areas appeared as very dark greys. The S4's native resolution of 800 x 600 (SVGA) is an entry-level spec these days, but the projector does a good job of resizing a 1024 x 768 computer desktop. When playing a film, you can make out individual pixels if you stand very close to the image. At normal viewing distances your own built-in human optical processing system takes over and you don't notice them.

On the audio side, the built-in, one-watt mono speaker will do at a pinch for movies. But most people would probably want to route the audio through an external sound system – and it's worth remembering that with most projectors you'd have no option but to.

Overall, given reasonably dark conditions, this projector provides a convincing, cinema-like viewing experience. For younger children it's the greatest show on earth.

Epson has been listening to how people actually want to use projectors and has acted on the results. For this reason the S4 deserves our enthusiastic and (almost) unreserved recommendation. This is an excellent first projector and even if you had intended spending a lot more on a home theatre display, it might be worth taking a look at this first.

■ MICHAEL FOREMAN



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