PRINTERS

PhotoReview
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EDITOR'S CHOICE

Epson Stylus Photo RX510

AN ALL-IN-ONE PRINTER/SCANNER/COPIER WITH FEATURES TO ATTRACT DIGITAL PHOTOGRAPHERS.

Promoted as an 'all-in-one digital photo lab', Epson's Stylus Photo RX510 is worth a close look if you're reasonably new to digital photography and haven't yet bought a printer or scanner. This device combines both functions, but offers higher output quality levels than competing devices for the same cost. The printer is a six-colour model that uses a new type of dye-based ink in cartridges that are individually replaceable.

The RX510 also sports the latest direct printing facilities and is DPOF and Direct Print compatible. Five card slots are provided for direct insertion of Memory Stick, Memory Stick PRO, MultiMedia Card, SD Memory Card, xD-Picture Card, Smart Media, Compact Flash, and IBM Microdrive media. A cover is provided for the card slots to protect them from dust (which can corrupt card memories).

Prints can be output with narrow white borders or printed edge-to-edge and facilities are provided for printing thumbnail sheets of all images on a memory card without a computer. You can also print directly from – or scan into – most software applications.

The scanner isn't limited to print and artwork scanning; a transparency unit allows you to scan negatives and slides. Holders provided accept up to six frames of 35mm film in a strip or four mounted slides and there are mounts behind the reflective document mat for storing the film holders so they don't get mislaid. With a scan resolution of up to 2400 x 4800dpi and bundled Photo Restoration technology, users can scan in old photos and negatives, restore their colour on a computer screen and print them immediately.

Copying combines both functions and the unit works as a stand-alone copier with features to match those of many dedicated machines. You can even make mirror-image copies for printing on T-shirt transfer media! Finally, the RX510 can be connected to a PC and modem and used as a fax machine via standard fax software. When this issue of *Photo Review* went to press, Epson's RX510 was the only multi-function device on the

market that combined all these facilities and the only one that could scan 35mm negatives and mounted or unmounted slides.

On test, we found the RX510 worked fairly quickly for most functions. It took one minute and 48 seconds to copy a 10 x 15cm print directly and print it out, using the RX510's copy button. An A4 photo print took roughly four and a half minutes to produce. Scanning speed depends on the resolution setting and size of the original. Using the Epson Scan interface, we scanned a 35mm negative at 12,800 dpi (the highest setting) in one minute and 40 seconds, which is pretty fast. This produced a 5632 x 8853 pixel image, which was saved as a 25.3MB JPEG file. This file could be printed out at 75 x 47.7 cm when re-sized to 300 dpi.

On test, the RX510's overall picture quality proved to be surprisingly good. The images we produced were a close match to our originals, although we detected a slight increase in contrast and a marginal red/magenta shift in both the colour and B&W photos we scanned. The reproduced images were also just a touch softer. But the differences were only noticeable when the copies and originals were viewed side-by-side – and you had to look closely to detect them.

Initial consumables costs for the RX510 are fairly hefty, with each ink cartridge priced at $20.90 ($125.40 for the lot!) and photo paper ranging from $36.30 for 20 A4 sheets of ColorLife Photo Paper down to $20.90 for the same size and quantity of the lighter-weight Photo Paper. We calculated the cost for an A4 photo at $1.81 for the most expensive paper plus between $2.50 and $3.30 for ink. (In our tests, the first ink cartridge ran out after 38 borderless A4 photo prints.)

Using the RX510 as a direct printer is straightforward, once you've figured out how the buttons integrate with each other. Driving it from a computer is even easier. The software bundle includes Epson's PhotoQuicker 3.5, Epson Scan, Epson Copy and Epson's Print Image Framer and Print Image

Framer Designer applications. These are generally easy to use, even in the Advanced modes.

The RX510 is an impressive all-rounder and its price/performance ratio makes it a stand-out product for home offices, family snapshooters and anybody with a heap of prints and films that they want to digitise. Recommended. ∎

SPECIFICATIONS

MAXIMUM RESOLUTION:
printing – 5760 x 1440 'Optimised' dpi; scanning – 2400 x 4800dpi.

INTERFACE:
USB 2.0 (Windows and Macintosh) 480 Mbps

PAPER SIZES:
A4, A5, up to 216 x 356mm, 89 x 127mm, 127 x 178mm, 203 x 254mm.

INK CARTRIDGES:
T0491 (black), T0492, T0493, T0494, T0495, T0496 (colour).

CARD SLOTS:
CF, SM, MS (Memory Stick Pro compatible), SD/MMC, xD-Picture Card.

POWER CONSUMPTION:
21w (operational)

SPECIAL FEATURES:
direct print slots for CF (Type I and II), Microdrive, MS, SD/MMC and SM cards.

DIMENSIONS (WXHXD):
456 x 256 x 439mm

WEIGHT:
9.8Kg

RRP:
$599

DISTRIBUTOR:
Epson Australia, (02) 8899 3666; www.epson.com.au.