

# LEXMARK

**Lexmark C520n**  
**Lexmark C522n**  
**Lexmark C524n**  
**Lexmark C524dn**  
**Lexmark C524dtn**

*20ppm full color*  
*20ppm black & white*



***Sum-up: A breakthrough in speed and price for color laser printing.***

Last year, Lexmark came out with the C510 series, a very good economy model priced at \$599 and up. This year, they've topped themselves with the new C520/C522/C524 family. Though priced low, these models are remarkably fast, at 20ppm in both color and black-and-white, while almost all of their rivals run at speeds of 4 to 8ppm in color. They also have some superior features that make them more than just minimal printers.

The five models in the family are:

- The C522n, the base-level machine with a 250-sheet paper capacity (\$499) and Ethernet, along with 128MB of memory.
- The C520n, a retail-channel version of the C522n, also \$499, and almost, but not quite, identical.
- The C524n, which adds networking and returns to 128MB of standard memory (\$699).
- The C524dn, which adds standard automatic duplexing (\$999).
- The C524dtn, which adds an extra 500-sheet tray (\$1,299).



*Lexmark C522n — A low-cost yet remarkably speedy printer.*

The C520n/C522n engine comes with 312MHz processor, and the other C524 models have a 500MHz processor. These machines all support good printing speeds: 20ppm in color, 20ppm in black-and-white. Along with a few other vendors, Lexmark has made sure that getting into color printing at the entry-level no longer means making big sacrifices in speed. PostScript is a standard feature through the whole line.

These models have decent memory capacity. They start with 128MB, upgradeable to 640MB. That much memory may be helpful, because unlike some of their low-cost competitors, these are Postscript-based machines, making them useful for a wide variety of graphics applications. The models print at a resolution of 1,200dpi. A 20GB hard disk is an option on all but the C522n.

Paper capacity is limited, based on the standard 250-sheet paper tray and an

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optional 500-sheet paper tray (standard on the C524dtn). There is a 250-sheet output tray. Duplexing is an option on the two higher-end C524 models. Note that the C520n does not offer the 500-sheet input option.

USB and Ethernet are standard on all models. Wireless Ethernet is an option as well.

We don't have final supplies cost information on these new models, but the preliminary, rough estimates would have black pages costing around 2.5¢, color pages around 11¢. Those numbers are higher than average, but not far off from that of other economy models. (Note that the C520n, which uses only the low-capacity consumables, will be somewhat costlier to run.)

Lexmark believes what sets its machines off from competitors' is a more extensive set of color-printing controls, much like those found on higher-cost printers. This series also allows the administrator to lock out some users from use of color, a good feature for a workgroup in which only some users really need color and where you want to keep costs down. Like other Lexmark models, there is an extensive suite of software available, with support for

bar codes, and forms creation and printing.

But where these machines have everyone else beat is in sheer speed for the price. Other low-cost models print at a relatively slow speed in color, from 4ppm to 8ppm in color. At 20ppm, this family has remarkable speed, setting a new standard for low-cost color lasers. As such, it competes very well with a slew of low-cost printers from Dell and others. The C522n is particularly a standout, while the C524 models are quite solid as well, if a little less unique.

Making a workgroup color printer for under \$1,000 that has decent color control software is a nice plus. What's remarkable is that its 20ppm speed makes it a creditable workgroup printer on its own. These models get our Editor's Choice Award in the economy category.

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