

THE OFFICE LASER PRINTER GUIDE



Lexmark T632

- **Speeds up to 49 pages per minute**
- **Black-and-white laser technology**
- **Prices from \$300 to \$15,000+**

**Better Buys
for Business**

**EDITOR'S
CHOICE
2004**

**Editor's
Choice
Reprint**

Better Buys for Business is the leading independent buyer's guide to office equipment. Our mission is to help buyers of copiers, printers, fax machines, scanners, and duplicators make smarter purchasing decisions. To learn more about *Better Buys for Business*, including subscription information on our independent guides which contain ratings for all vendor models, contact us:

800 247 2185
www.betterbuys.com

**The Nation's Leading Independent
Buyer's Guides for Office Equipment**

**Better Buys
for Business**

LEXMARK

Lexmark T632
Lexmark T632n
Lexmark T632tn
Lexmark T632dtn
Lexmark T632dtnf
40ppm



Sum-up: Great features and a good cost per page make for an outstanding printer series.

This new printer series illustrates the amazing price changes that have taken place year-to-year in the laser printer market. The 40ppm T632 replaces Lexmark's older 40ppm T622. The features of the two printer families are not very different, but the price tags are. The older family's base street price was \$1,699; the base-level T632 costs \$1,059. Corresponding printers in each family have similar discounts. In other words, getting the same printing power is one-third less expensive than it was a year ago.

Because the T632 is based on the same basic architecture as the 35ppm T630, they have a lot of features in common. The T632 does, however, have a faster processor, at 350MHz. But that is a minor difference.

The models in the family are:

- The base-level T632 (\$1,059)
- The network-ready T632n (\$1,539)
- The T632tn, which adds a second standard 500-sheet input drawer (\$1,779)
- The T632dtn, which adds automatic duplexing (\$2,039)
- The T632dtnf, which adds to all the above features a single-position stapler-finisher (\$2,449)

As with other Lexmark models, you can build your own configuration of features by adding options to the base machine.

The T632 family prints at 1,200dpi. All of the printers in the family start with a generous 64MB of memory, and that can be upgraded to a solid 320MB. That expansion may be needed if you use the printer for complex jobs involving PostScript and digital collation. You might also consider the 20GB hard disk for such jobs, though at \$535, it's not cheap. Connectivity is through the usual solid set of Lexmark options, now including a Wi-Fi external server.

The base model and the T632n start with one 500-sheet paper tray; the other ones start with two. All units have a 100-sheet bypass tray as well. Like other Lexmark T-series printers, you have a wide choice of options, including 250-sheet paper trays, 500-sheet paper trays, and a 2,000 sheet large-capacity tray. The maximum configuration is 4,100 sheets. There is also an optional envelope feeder that holds up to 85 envelopes.

On the output side, there are four options beyond the default 500-sheet tray. You can install up to four 650-sheet output bins. Alternately, you can get a 1,850-sheet stacker. A third option is a mailbox with five 100-sheet bins. You can install one or two of these mailboxes at a time. The final option (standard on the T632dtnf) is the StapleSmart finisher, which can single-position staple up to 25 sheets.

These are pretty good options, but one of the few weak points of this excellent machine is the lack of a more sophisticated finisher, one that can staple at multiple positions and perhaps deliver hole punching. Given the speed and 200,000-page duty cycle of the machines, the lack of a more sophisticated finisher makes it a little less useful for some offices.

As with other high-end Lexmark printers, multifunctionality is an option.

You can, if you get the most economical option (the 32,000-sheet all-in-one cartridge), print pages for around 1.1 cents per page.

This is not the best in the industry but is quite good, especially compared with Lexmark's own 35ppm T630. As with the T630, we applaud the fact that Lexmark does not stint on the starter cartridge, delivering a hefty 21,000-page cartridge in the box.

There are no other letter/legal-size printers at this speed level other than the relabeled versions of this platform. These printers are excellent choices for a busy office and so get our Editor's Choice award.

Lexmark T634
Lexmark T634n
Lexmark T634tn
Lexmark T634dtn
Lexmark T634dtnf

45ppm



Sum-up: Great performance and low cost of operation at a reasonable price.

The Lexmark T634 family is the new top letter/legal-size printer in the Lexmark lineup. This 45ppm model is based on the same basic architecture as the T630 and T632, and indeed its accessories are interchangeable with those siblings as are its consumables with the T632. We don't want to give it short shrift, but its features, with a few exceptions, are identical to those of the T632.

Of course, the big difference is the T634 runs at 45ppm, and this is supported by a 500MHz processor. While the base model T634 comes with 64MB of memory (which can be upgraded to 320MB), the other models start with 80MB, upgradable to 336MB. Plus, multifunctionality is an option.

In every other way, including consumables, accessories, and other specs, these models are the same as the T632 family machines (see above).

The family members are:

- The base, stripped-down T634 (\$1,489)
- The network-oriented T634n (\$1,874)
- The T634tn, with the extra 500-sheet paper tray (\$2,129)
- The T634dtn, with the extra 500-sheet tray and duplex (\$2,399)
- The T634dtnf with the StapleSmart finisher (\$2,749)

This printer series is designed to compete with the Hewlett-Packard LaserJet 4300. Both families run at 45ppm. The T634n sells for \$1,874; the HP 4300n sells for an almost identical \$1,849. The Lexmark models come with more memory and more processor speed. While both machines start with 600 sheets of paper capacity, the T634n can be expanded to 4,100 sheets, besting the 4300n's 2,600 sheets. And while the 4300n



Lexmark T634dtn — This fully loaded model has high capacity and great speed.

offers a stapling option and about 750 sheets of output capacity, the Lexmark model has a wide variety of output options, with room for over 2,000 sheets. Neither machine has a serious finisher with multiposition stapling and hole punching. The HP has the advantage on per-page cost, however, by a quarter of a cent per page. These machines are very close, but we think that for users that need a power machine, the Lexmark T634n has a slight edge.

As with the other Lexmark T-series models, these are great buys. They are solid machines with proven architectures, low prices, and fine options. On this series in particular, the lack of a serious finisher (like that on the Lexmark W820) is a major shortcoming. With so much speed, you'd expect this to be available. Nevertheless, we think the T634 family deserves our Editor's Choice Award.

Lexmark W820
Lexmark W820n
Lexmark W820dn
45ppm

Sum-up: A fully featured ledger-size printer.

Contact Better Buys for Business at 800 247 2185, www.betterbuys.com or 370 Technology Drive, Malvern, PA 19355.

Lexmark's W820 series is made up of ledger-size, 45ppm printers. It features Lexmark design from the ground up and resembles the letter/legal T-series printers. These models have plenty of competition at 45ppm, but the machines still are some of the better ones on the market.

Lexmark has made this a serious departmental printer by adding sophisticated finishing features. But other characteristics are top-notch as well.

The W820 series is priced to sell. The base model W820 sells for \$2,099; the networked version (W820n) goes for \$2,569; the duplex and networking model (W820dn) costs \$3,079. These prices are dramatically reduced from last year, when each of these models cost around \$800 to \$900 more than they do now.

Features: The W820 series has some very good features. The models include:

- A 350MHz processor
- 32MB of memory (64MB in the n and dn models), expandable to 384MB
- An optional 5GB hard disk
- 1,200dpi IQ interpolated default resolution
- USB connection standard and Ethernet optional
- An out-of-the-box input capacity of 1,035 sheets, which can be expanded to 3,535 sheets with the addition of a high-capacity feeder.

The W820 comes with 500 sheets of standard output capacity, and this includes offset stacking. If you get one of the optional finishers, that capacity can be raised to 3,750 sheets with offsetting, hole punching, and multiposition stapling. The series also has an optional dedicated envelope feeder.

The optional finisher is a solid add-on. This is a multiposition finisher that comes in three- or four-hole punch versions. The company says it can deliver a two-hole punch version on special order for those clients that absolutely need that capacity. In order to use the finisher, you'll need a printer stand (\$349) or the high-capacity option (\$1,086) as well.

The printer also boasts a solid duty cycle of 250,000 pages per month, along with an excellent cost per page of 0.9 cents.

Multifunctionality: Both network-ready models in the family can be made into multifunctional machines by adding Lexmark's X7500 MFP option. By buying it, you can add faxing, copying, and scanning capability to the basic print functionality. The scanning can be black-and-white or color.

Competition: You might want to look at three very similar models, namely:

- Sharp's AR-P450B

- Xerox's N4525/N
- Ricoh's Aficio AP4510

All of these share similar characteristics with the Lexmark W820 family. They are 45ppm ledger-size printers with prices roughly the same for similar versions; even the Sharp's cost per page is similar. Their other features are pretty comparable as well. One main difference is in finishing options, which are pretty good on the machines but somewhat different in specifications. Another is in multifunctional flexibility, something the Lexmark and Sharp models permit.

Conclusion: The W820 family is yet another fine entry in a superior lineup for Lexmark. These new printers achieve high price/performance levels, and they are engineered for maximum flexibility, with a wide variety of options. The W820 combines excellent speed with ledger-size printing at a price unimaginable a few years ago. While the competition in its class is tight, the W820 family has enough of an edge to get our Editor's Choice Award.

Excerpted from The Office Laser Printer Guide, volume 160, January 2004. © 2004 Progressive Business Publications, Inc.



Lexmark W820 — Lexmark's top-of-the-line wide-format printer offers excellent paper-handling options and blazing 45ppm speed.

Contact Better Buys for Business at 800 247 2185, www.betterbuys.com or 370 Technology Drive, Malvern, PA 19355.