All-in-one printers

We pick the best-value printers that let you fax, scan and copy

All-in-one printers combine a scanner, photocopier and printer in one unit. Some higher-end models will also have a fax. This can be a great way of saving money, as you won't have to fork out for three or four separate devices.

There's a bewildering array of models on the market. We've tested a range of popular makes, and our analysis revealed two Best Buys, both from Canon.

If you do decide to invest in an all-in-one printer, it's important to consider how much it will cost you in the long term. Often, the print costs aren't reflected in the initial price, as the graph, right, shows.

The Dell AIO 948 (14) is priced at £70, but it has the most expensive running costs of the printers we tested – it will set you back £505 over three years. You'd save £428 if you bought the Kodak ESP 3 (6) instead. It costs £80 in the shops and just £67 to run over three years.

Printing photos can also be expensive. It would cost you £2.54 to print an 8x10-inch colour photo on the Dell (14), and that's without factoring in the cost of photo paper (see Which?, April 2008, p70 for our Best Buys). But if you bought the Kodak (6) you'd be able to print a colour photo for 17p.

Finally, as all-in-ones often cost more than standalone inkjet printers, it's important to ask yourself whether you really need the extra features. If you don't think you'll use the scanner or the copier, there's no point in having them.

See 'Worth considering', below, for our top budget pick and a great alternative if you're only interested in printing photos. They not Best Buys, but they offer good value for money.
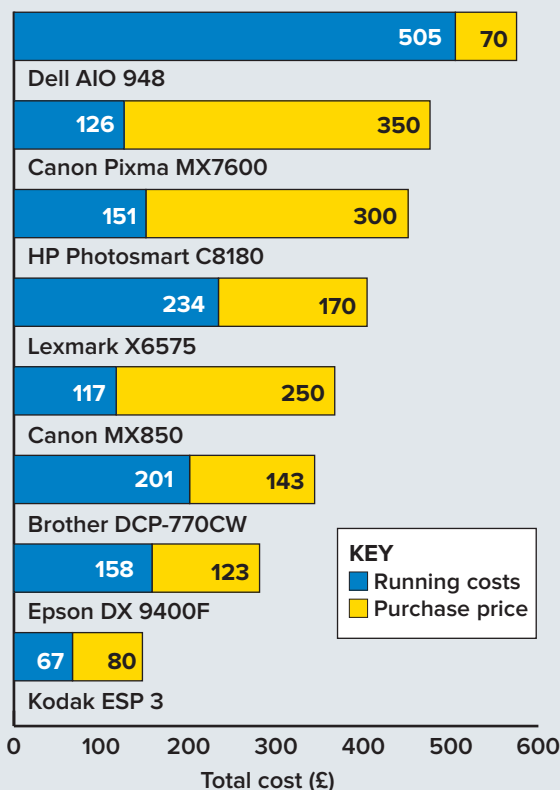
Contacts

Brother 0870 830 4000; www.brother.co.uk
Canon 0870 514 3723; www.canon.co.uk
Dell 0870 152 4699; www.dell.co.uk
Epson 0870 241 6900; www.epson.co.uk
HP 0870 010 4320; www.hp.co.uk
Kodak 0870 243 0270; www.kodak.com
Lexmark 0870 444 0044 www.lexmark.co.uk

Running costs

What will a printer cost you in the long run?

This graph will help you compare initial purchase prices and three-year ink costs for a moderate user (someone who prints one photo, three text pages and two colour graphics pages a week) to give you an idea of how much the printer will cost over its expected lifespan. Cartridge costs vary, so our print costs should be used as a guide only.

Dell AIO 948 — Running costs 505, Purchase price 70
Canon Pixma MX7600 — Running costs 126, Purchase price 350
HP Photosmart C8180 — Running costs 151, Purchase price 300
Lexmark X6575 — Running costs 234, Purchase price 170
Canon MX850 — Running costs 117, Purchase price 250
Brother DCP-770CW — Running costs 201, Purchase price 143
Epson DX 9400F — Running costs 158, Purchase price 123
Kodak ESP 3 — Running costs 67, Purchase price 80

KEY
■ Running costs
■ Purchase price

Total cost (£)

⬇ Worth considering

Photo printer HP A526 **67%** £50

It isn't a Best Buy, or an all-in-one, but this budget photo printer has a lot going for it. It produces reasonable colour prints, particularly when printing directly from your computer, and good black-and-white images. A 6x4-inch photo will cost you about 32p.
WORTH KNOWING Most good small photo printers cost around £100. You'll get 156 photos from the A526 before you've paid that much.

All-in-one printer Kodak ESP 3 **60%** £80

If you want a machine that's more versatile than a small photo printer, intend to print a lot of photos and don't want to pay the earth, then pick up a Kodak ESP 3 (6). Although it isn't a Best Buy, the initial purchase price is low, it produces good-quality images for just 17p (excluding paper) and has low costs for other types of printing.
WORTH KNOWING You can't print photos directly from memory cards.

76% Canon Pixma MX850 £250

This Canon Pixma is our top-scoring Best Buy, thanks to a great performance when printing both text and photos. Photographs scan well and at good speeds. Results aren't as good when scanning documents that combine both text and images, but are still acceptable. Although the MX850 is quite expensive, running costs are low. The printer takes up quite a lot of desktop space, so make sure you've got room for it.

WORTH KNOWING An automatic document feeder makes sending long faxes easy.

Three-year running costs £117
Wi-Fi No **Fax** Yes

71% Canon Pixma MX7600 £350

The Pixma MX7600 produces excellent text documents and good photos at impressive speeds, and it's easy to use. Scanning is better on this device than on the cheaper MX850. But, like its sibling, it has a duplexing function, which means you can print double-sided documents automatically. Although it's slightly more expensive to run than the MX850, it's a lot cheaper than other models we've tested.

WE FOUND The sealer cartridge that treats plain paper before printing improves the quality of documents.

Three-year running costs £126
Wi-Fi No **Fax** Yes

MODEL		SPECIFICATION				WHICH? TEST PERFORMANCE							SCORE %
		PRICE (£)	BLACK TEXT (£)	COLOUR GRAPHICS (£)	PHOTO (£)	TEXT QUALITY	TEXT SPEED	PHOTO QUALITY	PHOTO SPEED	SCANNING	COPYING	EASE OF USE	
1	**CANON** Pixma MX850	250	0.03	0.12	0.42	★★★★★	★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★	★★★	★★★★	★★★★★	76
2	**CANON** Pixma MX7600	350	0.04	0.13	0.43	★★★★★	★★★★	★★★★	★★★	★★★★	★★★	★★★★★	71
3	**EPSON** DX 9400F	123	0.04	0.15	0.59	★★★★	★★★	★★★★	★★	★★★	★★★	★★★★	65
4	**HP** Photosmart C8180	300	0.05	0.14	0.54	★★	★★★★	★★★★★	★★★	★★★★	★★★	★★★★	65
5	**EPSON** Stylus DX7450	80	0.03	0.16	0.62	★★★★	★★★	★★	★★	★★★★	★★★★	★★★★	63
6	**KODAK** ESP 3	80	0.02	0.10	0.17	★★★	★★★	★★★★	★★★	★★★★	★★★	★★★★	60
7	**CANON** Pixma MP220	60	0.06	0.19	0.67	★★★★	★★★★	★★★★	★★★	★★★★	★★★	★★★★	59
8	**BROTHER** DCP-770CW	143	0.04	0.15	0.87	★★★	★★★	★★★★	★	★★★	★★★	★★★★	57
9	**BROTHER** DCP-560CN	99	0.04	0.15	0.82	★★★	★★★	★★★★	★★	★★★	★★★	★★★★	56
10	**BROTHER** MFC-465CN	120	0.04	0.15	0.75	★★★	★★★	★★★★	★★	★★★★	★★★	★★★★	56
11	**BROTHER** MFC-885CW	210	0.04	0.16	0.64	★★★	★★★	★★★★	★★	★★★	★★★	★★★★	56
12	**LEXMARK** X6575	170	0.04	0.14	1.10	★★★	★★★★	★★★	★★	★★★	★★★	★★★★	56
13	**HP** Deskjet F2180	40	0.10	0.34	0.71	★★★★★	★★★	★★★★★	★★	★★★	★★★	★★★	55
14	**DELL** AIO 948	70	0.06	0.26	2.54	★★	★★★★★	★★★★	★★	★★★	★★★	★★★★	51

USING THE TABLE
The more stars the better.
Specification
Price See p47. **Black text/Colour graphics/Photo** The cost of ink per A4 page of text, colour graphics document or photo. Our calculations take into account the number of pages we were able to print before the cartridge(s) ran out. Where models have photo ink, this was used for photo costs.

Test performance
Text quality Ratings for printing one page of black-and-white text. **Text speed** Five A4 text pages must print in under 30 seconds to achieve ★★★★★. **Photo quality** Quality of printing an A4 photo. Where models have an optional photo ink cartridge, this was used. **Photo speed** An A4 photo must print in less than a minute to achieve ★★★★★. ★ means it took more than eight minutes. **Scanning** Quality, speed and ability to scan different-sized items, and how effectively the software translated scanned documents into text. **Copying** Quality and speed of copying text, images and photos with and without using a PC.

Score
Ignores price and is based on:

Printing	**35%**
Ease of use	**20%**
Scanning	**15%**
Copying	**15%**
Versatility	**10%**
Environmental	**5%**