Clear COMmunICaTions

From those friendly people at DOT-COMmunICaTions

Clear COMmunICaTions is a regular column offering I.T. advice & support. If you have an IT-related problem that would also benefit others, please send an email to the address shown below, & we'll do our best to answer your questions.

Q. I need a new printer at work. Which would be better a Laser or Inkjet?

A. It depends on whether or not you primarily print in black and white or colour and how many copies you make. While it is true that colour inkjet printers are very cheap to buy, they are usually expensive to run if you need to print more than a few pages at a time.

Most inkjets are great until you have to purchase replacement ink cartridges for them, which will also dry up if not used for a period of time. What the manufacturers of inkjet printers don't fully explain to consumers is the true cost of ownership of a low-cost colour inkjet printer.

The price of a new A4 Inkjet printer can start at under £30 at entry level to around £90 for a higher quality printer. The cost of producing an A4 text page is around 8p with a full colour A4 photograph costing between 12p and 50p dependent on the printer.

The price of a personal A4 Laser starts at about £65 for a monochrome (black & white) printer and between £190 to £400 for a small colour laser. The cost of producing an A4 text page is around 1p with a combined colour graphics and text page at around 2p to 5p.

As you can see, the difference in purchase price is offset by the cost of each print - with the laser producing an A4 page at up to a tenth of the cost of an inkjet print.

Laser printers therefore are much cheaper to run than an inkjet, and will excel at the printing of text and solid colour graphics - logo's and charts for example. However, the machines in this price range are unlikely to output a photo realistic print to the same quality as an inkjet which can also be found with the ability to print directly onto CD's and DVD's or from cameras, mobile phones and data cards without even having to turn on your PC.

If you are primarily printing black and in quantity, then a standard laser printer would be your best bet. If the only colour is likely to be the header, then paying for a professional printer to print these beforehand or even use an ink jet to print partial color documents (letterheads etc.) and feed them back for the text whenever possible, can significantly lower your average printing costs.

Q. Should we try and ban our staff and volunteers from visiting social networking sites such as facebook while at work?

A. We all know how to waste time and we all know that the latest techie gismos seem the consume the lives of some people that we know. But is it better to allow staff and volunteers to have access to Facebook, Twitter or other online tools?

There are no easy answers as to whether organisations should allow the use of social networking sites but here are some of the arguments to consider:

http://tinyurl.com/yes36nv & **http://tinyurl.com/ycacdyp**

Some of the possible benefits of saying yes:

http://tinyurl.com/yflmb4e

Some of the risks: **http://tinyurl.com/ybfszna**

Acceptable Internet Use Policies—what to include:

http://tinyurl.com/ybugrd8

Funding for ICT

Whilst there are a number of trusts and grant funders who look favourably on applications for ICT within a project application, a limited number of funders will specifically fund ICT. Some of these are described in this article.

For details: **http://tinyurl.com/y8q48n4**

10 cool things you can do with a USB flash drive

Your USB flash drive can do a whole lot more than just move data around. Here's a variety of creative ways to put that drive to good use.

To find out more, go to: **http://tinyurl.com/ljklry**

10+ Microsoft Office add-ins to simplify your work

The right add-in can provide helpful features and make existing Office capabilities easier to use. Here's a roundup of handy add-ins for various Office applications.

To find out more, go to: **http://tinyurl.com/d4sula**

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