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ValueClick - The Pay-for-Results Advertising Network

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Lyons' Den

## I Have Seen the Printer, and it is Laser

By Daniel J. Lyons

The one down side to upgrading to a current Mac is that your old printer is no longer compatible. Sure you can get a LocalTalk to EtherTalk adapter for \$100 or for Parallel compatible printers, a Parallel to USB adapter for \$40 but for many older Mac printers, it's simply not worth it.

Once you decide to purchase a new printer, you need to decide which type to get. Ink-jets are the most common and least expensive option, a quality ink-jet can be purchased for \$100 or less. The upside to ink-jets is the ability to print photo-quality color images. The down side is that these printers are extremely slow, often use water-permeable inks (which can smear when wet) and tend to be fairly noisy due to their many moving parts. Laser printers solve the speed, and some of the noise issues, but at a cost starting at around \$300. The upside to a laser printer is sharp, unsmearable text and graphics, which are printed almost instantly. The down side, besides being more expensive is the complete lack of color (color laser printers start at \$1000 and

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can cost up to \$5000, not a real option for the average user).

After years of dried up color cartridges in my DeskWriter 550C, I finally admitted that I didn't really need color and was tired of waiting while pages print line by line. With this in mind (and a tax return in pocket) I decided to look into purchasing a laser printer.

My search eventually came down to two USB compatible laser printers; Epson's 5700i and Brother's HL-1240. The HL-1240 is a 12 page per minute (ppm) laser printer, 4ppm than the 5700i. Both printers have a one-year warranty, but only Brother offers overnight exchange in some circumstances. Add these facts to a price tag of \$299 verses \$399 for the 5700i and the winner is clear:



I did experience one problem when installing my 1240 on a G4 running OS9 which caused the system to hang whenever printing from certain applications, including AOL 5.0 and Quicken 2000. This problem, however, was quickly solved by upgrading the printer driver from version 1.16 to version 1.34. If you're installing the 1240 on an OS9 machine, check the version of your driver before you complete

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the installation. Hopefully, more Brother has started including the newer drivers with their printers since I purchased mine. While this problem was a concern, it turned out to be the only one that I encountered.

The design of the 1240 has made things much easier for me than they were with my old printer. I keep my printer on a shelf under my flatbed scanner, leaving very little room to flip open the top of the printer to change ink or access paper jams. With the 1240, this is a non-issue since the front of the printer opens to allow access to both the toner cartridge/drum assembly and the paper path. With this front closed, you also have the manual feed slot and paper tray accessible from the front. The only reason that you would need access to the back of the printer is the straight through print path is you were printing on heavy stock paper.

At the office, the HL-1240 also performed admirably as a networked printer. When my Network Laser went down a few weeks ago, I used a 1240 connected to an old Pentium 133 Print Server to fill the gap. The personal sized toner cartridge did take a beating and emptied very quickly, but besides that there were no problems or jams of any kind during about three weeks that it was used in this capacity.

It's nice to see a printer that can be labeled cheap and high quality at the same time. So far I have worked with three HL-1240 printers in both Mac and Windows environments using both Parallel and USB

connections and have yet to encounter any problems besides the driver issue mentioned above. If you're looking for a high-quality laser printer, set your sights on the HL-1240.

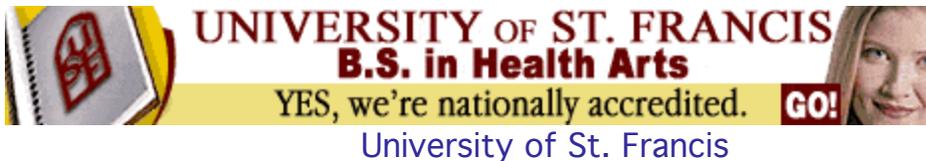
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### ***The Lyons' Den***

*Daniel J. Lyons started with the Mac back in 1989 laying out a High School newspaper on an SE and was immediately hooked.*

*Now, several computers later, he is hoping to share his thoughts and experiences and maybe even a few gripes with anyone who will listen.*

*Daniel has worked in several computer labs and built and maintained numerous office networks over the past ten years. He is currently employed as a Technology Manager and has experience with both AppleShare and NT networks.*



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