

Printer Cartridges

Have you ever wondered why printer ink and toner is so expensive? It is because printer manufacturers practically give away the printers so they can then sell you high priced printer supplies. They make all their money on the ink and toner, not on the price of the printer.

Dare I say that sometimes it is cheaper to buy a new printer then it is to buy new printer cartridges for your old printer. Of course this is a terrible practice for the environment, but if your printer is old and giving you any kind of trouble sometimes it makes more sense just to buy a new printer the next time you need cartridges.

Genuine or Third Party

For many years people have asked me about less expensive places to get printer ink cartridges. Some have even asked about refill kits that teach you how to refill your current cartridges with new ink. I have always resisted using anything other than genuine printer manufactured cartridges. The reason is that printers are the most troublesome component of people's computers and I usually don't want to introduce anything to give them a reason not to work properly. Some manufacturers even go to the trouble of identifying whether a cartridge is genuine or not and will disable features (or even the printer entirely) if a genuine cartridge is not installed (remember they want you to buy their ink).



So I have to tell people that it is a gamble whether a third party cartridge will work or not. If you want to save some money on printer supplies you will have to "buy and try" with no guarantee that they will work in your printer. Sure the company you purchase from may give you a money-back guarantee, but then you have to go through all the time and trouble to buy it, try it and return it if it does not work.

PCWorld Magazine Cartridge Test

PCWorld Magazine recently did a test comparing genuine to third party cartridges. Read the full article [here](#).

Here is part of what they had to say:

"With one exception (HP vs. third-party inks), images made with manufacturers'

inks were more accurate and more color-rich... On the other hand, printing with the third-party cartridges in our tests will save you anywhere from 3 percent to nearly 70 percent per page, depending on what kind of printing you're doing. For example, a set of remanufactured Epson Stylus CX5000 color cartridges (cyan, magenta, and yellow) from *123Inkjets.com* printed nearly 70 percent more pages than the Epson ink, at a cost of about 9 cents per page of color printing, and 2.6 cents per page for black. In contrast, Epson's ink cost 30 cents per page of color printing and about 10 cents per page for black. Epson's Web site says that a set of its color cartridges for the CX5000 should print about 350 pages, but the Epson cartridges we tested averaged only about 190 pages. In contrast *123Inkjets'* remanufactured color cartridges averaged just over 320 pages."



"Brand-Name Cartridges Were More Reliable. For instance, a few *Walgreens* and *OverStock.com* cartridges designed for the Lexmark X3470 printer suffered from color mixing (in which ink from one cartridge leaks into another inside the printer) and from print-quality defects. supposedly compatible Cartridge World cartridges--40 of them, in fact--failed to work in the Epson Stylus CX5000 printer and could not be tested."

So if you want the best possible pictures then it would make sense to stick with genuine cartridges. If all you do is everyday printing then it might makes sense to try third party cartridges.

Alternative Printer Supplies Sources

So having said all that, where can you go to buy less expensive cartridges for your printer? Well, many local office supply stores offer their own brand printer cartridges (hey, they want in on the action). See if *Staples* or *Office Depot* offers a less expensive alternative cartridge for your printer.

To save even more money (and to be more adventuresome) you can try these websites:

123Inkjets.com

cartridgeworldusa.com

ldproducts.com

Recycle

Please remember to recycle your old cartridges. Many stores will gladly take them back (Where do you think they get the cartridges they resell to you from?). Some stores will give you coupons towards the purchase of a new cartridge or simply keep them out of the landfill. Either way, please don't toss your old cartridges in the trash.

If you decide to try third party cartridges good luck and let me know how it goes.

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