

## Introduction

The purpose of this report is to make recommendations as to what printer our creative writing club should purchase.

At our last meeting, the club members asked us to research the problem and report back. Since we are both accountants and have worked at Best Buy, they believed that we could most easily solve the problem.

Currently, our club owns a six-year-old HP Deskjet printer, which we use to print our short stories for our weekly workshops. Unfortunately, this printer breaks down often, which has caused us to spend over \$300 in repair costs this year alone. More importantly, however, the printer malfunctions create stress and frustration for our members. We have been approved to spend \$500 on a new printer.

To research the problem, we surveyed the members of the club to develop our criteria, researched printer models online, read reviews, interviewed a sales associate at Best Buy and then evaluated our options.

We concluded that the XP InkBlaster 3000 meets most of criteria and is within our budget. If the club can raise funds for an extra \$250, we could purchase the XP InkBlaster MegaPrinter, which meets all of our criteria and would save us in printing costs over the long run.

Thank you for the opportunity to solve this problem. I look forward to discussing it at our next meeting.

## Research Methods

To solve the problem, we undertook the following steps

- **Survey the members:** A survey went out via Survey Monkey on Feb. 11<sup>th</sup>. We asked the club members to rate their satisfaction with the current printer, identify problems they had with the printer and suggest what we

features the new printer would require. This allowed us to come up with a criteria to select our new printer.

- **Interview club treasurer:** We interviewed Fiona McGibbon, the treasurer of our club, to find out how much we had to spend on a printer.
- **Research how to buy a printer for a club or business:** We found several articles about how to purchase a printer for a small business, then applied these findings to help us select a printer for our club. “Printer Problems That Will Sink Your Small Business” and “10 Tips To Purchase a Printer for Your Small Business” were the most important articles. Unfortunately, there were no articles about buying a printer for a club, but we feel that what we learned about buying a printer for a small business translates.
- **Research printer options online:** We used several technology blogs to research top printers. Unfortunately, it was difficult to determine the financial stake that the bloggers had in the companies, which might be a source of bias.
- **Visit Best Buy:** We visited Best Buy on March 1<sup>st</sup> and spoke to a sales representative named Daman. He allowed us to try out a few models, though several of the ones we were interested in weren't in stock. Since Daman works on commission, it was hard to know whether or not to trust his advice, but he did seem to be knowledgeable.
- **Read User Reviews:** We read user reviews on the top 5 models under consideration.
- **Evaluate the options based on our criteria:** We narrowed our printer choices down to 3 models, then used the research we had assembled to make our choice.

## Results

Our research yielded the following results.

**Member survey:** Of the 25 club members, 20 took our survey. This gives us a strong mandate to proceed. We learned that 100% of those surveyed were unhappy with the printer. The most common complaints were that the printer misfeeds too much

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(75%), uses ink too quickly (60%), and prints too slowly.(45%). We will use these responses as criteria to evaluate our options.

**Interview with Club Treasurer:** Ms McGibbon told us that we have \$500 to spend on a new printer, and that ink currently represents 30% of our club's budget. She told us that we go through 20 ink cartridges per year.

**Printer Research:** Our secondary research gave us insight into best practices for buying printers, and what top models current bloggers recommended. Some of the most relevant research was:

- Many businesses forget to factor ink and repair costs into their assessments. A \$50 printer might end up costing your business \$1000 a year more than a more expensive model (Business Insider, 2017).
- Wireless printers allow multiple users to print more easily. We had not considered this as a criteria, but added it ("Printer Problems", 2016).
- We should read warranties carefully, since sometimes they are a scam (Business Insider, 2017).
- Nearly every blog we read had the InkBlaster, XP and SuperPrint printers at the top of the list.

**Visit to Best Buy:** We visited a salesperson named Daman at Best Buy. He allowed us to try several models. We noticed that the InkBlaster lines were definitely the fastest. Daman also introduced us to the InkBlaster Mega Printer, which impressed us with both the speed and the quality of the print. Unfortunately, it was slightly outside of our budget.

**User Reviews:** It was hard to gain meaningful data from user reviews, since people tended to give either 5 star or 1 star reviews. Still, we were able to come up with some general strengths and weaknesses of all of the models we reviewed. This allowed us to narrow the numbers of printers we were considering to three printers: The XP HappyPrinter, The InkBlaster 3000 and the InkBlaster MegaPrinter.

## Conclusions

We have assembled our conclusions into a chart to be easier to read.

Printer	XP Happy Printer (\$300)	Ink Blaster 3000 (\$450)	Ink Blaster MegaPrinter (\$750)
Pro	<p>Easy to use and assemble.</p> <p>Has a sleek, modern design.</p> <p>Allows you to select an “ink saving” option.</p> <p>Was the cheapest option</p>	<p>Easy to use.</p> <p>Allows wireless printing.</p> <p>Uses ink efficiently</p> <p>Replacement cartridges are also not expensive.</p> <p>Within budget</p>	<p>Easy to use.</p> <p>Allows wireless printing.</p> <p>Was the fastest printer and was also rated the most efficient in ink use.</p> <p>Replacement cartridges not expensive.</p> <p>Has a scanner.</p> <p>Small footprint, so it won’t take up much space.</p>
Con	<p>Was the slowest printer we reviewed.</p> <p>User reviews suggested that it uses a lot of ink.</p> <p>Makes a loud noise when printing.</p> <p>Doesn’t have a scanner.</p> <p>Isn’t wireless</p>	<p>Is quite big, so will take up a lot of floor space.</p> <p>Some reviews claimed that it jams when it encounters jobs that use a lot of ink, like photographs. Since we don’t plan to print these, it’s less of a concern.</p>	<p>Is \$250 more expensive.</p>

## Recommendations

Based on the above conclusions, we recommend that our club purchase the Ink Blaster 3000. For the options within our budget, it fulfills all of the criteria and its negatives are not relevant to our situation.

If we were able to increase our budget, we recommend purchasing the InkBlaster Mega Printer. Daman at Best Buy did mention that the printer sometimes goes on sale for \$100 off, so we would only need to increase our budget by \$150. Since print cartridges are \$15 less expensive than the InkBlaster 3000, and since we go through 20 cartridges per year right now, we could potentially save in the long run by spending more today.

## **Budget**

Our budget is \$500. We also have a budget of \$1000 for ink every year.

## **Appendices**

We have attached the important articles that we researched, as well as the results of our survey.