

# Digital Imaging Review

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## OFFICE IMAGING PRODUCTS 2002: BLI'S PICKS OF THE YEAR

During the testing period for this year's awards, which ran from the spring of 2001 to the spring of 2002, more than 100 multifunctional products, fax machines and printers were subjected to BLI's rigorous in-house evaluation. The battery of tests includes an extensive durability test during which each unit is run at the manufacturer's maximum recommended monthly volume. In addition to assessing reliability, the tests are designed to evaluate such critical factors as misfeed frequency, copy and print quality, copy and print productivity, ease of use and economy, as well as connectivity issues such as feedback to workstations, administrative utilities, print drivers and multitasking.

As is the case every year, some models performed below

the bar in one or more areas, while others clearly excelled. While many products performed well overall this past year, a number stood out from the rest as clearly superior to their competition. Each year, with its "Pick of the Year" awards, BLI gives special recognition in each category to the products that provided the most outstanding performances in the laboratory, as well as the vendor whose overall product line was demonstrated to be the best by virtue of its cumulative test results (of course, only units tested by BLI in its lab are eligible to receive awards). The purpose of these awards is to better guide equipment buyers in their acquisition decisions.

Among the winners is...

### Canon imageRUNNER 5000 w/Multi-PDL Print Kit-A2 *Outstanding Segment 4 Multifunctional Imaging System, 2002*

Canon U.S.A., Inc.  
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Its outstanding blend of high reliability, efficiency, ease of use, multitasking, output quality and economy has earned the 50-ppm Canon imageRUNNER 5000, as tested with its optional Multi-PDL Print Kit-A2, a BLI "Pick of the Year" award for "Outstanding Segment 4 Multifunctional Imaging System, 2002." Providing one of the best reliability performances for Segment 4 multifunctional products tested to date, well-above-average print efficiency and a lower per-page supplies cost than most of its competitors, the Canon imageRUNNER 5000 clearly ranks among the top performers in Segment 4. Remarkably, this very-well-designed unit completed BLI's three-month, 300,000-impression test with just a single PM call and only two misfeeds, for a misfeed rate of one per 150,000 impressions, which is one of the



Canon imageRUNNER 5000

best misfeed rates on record in this segment. Notably, the imageRUNNER 5000's reliability performance mirrored

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almost exactly its performance when tested previously with a different controller as the imageRUNNER 5000N, when it also completed a 300,000-impression test with just one PM and logged just one more misfeed than the imageRUNNER 5000 did in this more recent test. Also noteworthy is that the output produced by the unit received BLI's highest image quality rating for all types of output in both print and copy modes.

The multitasking capabilities of the imageRUNNER 5000 are also good, offering users the ability to program four copy jobs while another copy job is in progress (up to five copy jobs while a print job is in progress). In addition, a priority setting of 1, 2 or 3 can be assigned to each function. Moreover, its efficiency is competitive in all copy modes.

Enhancing the overall productivity offered by this unit is a first-print-out time that is faster than that of most other Segment 4 units tested and its very good ease of use both from the desktop and its very-well-designed control panel, which provides a wide range of status information and allows selection of all the features necessary for most typical copying jobs from the main screen. Moreover, this unit offers easy procedures for loading paper, adjusting paper drawers and replacing toner. BLI test technicians also noted that the unit's modular design, with a pull-out drawer housing the fuser, transfer area and duplexer, allows for very easy access to remove misfeeds.

Connected to BLI's test network via the 10/100BaseTX Ethernet network interface on the unit's optional embedded Canon Multi-PDL Print Kit-A2, the Canon imageRUNNER 5000 also provided good performance as a printer, with easy-to-use graphical PCL 5e, PCL 6 and PostScript 3 (emulation) print drivers, which are included for Windows 98, 2000, Me and NT 4.0. Moreover, jobs can be stored and printed again later using the unit's mailbox printing capability (with the ability to change job settings such as quantity, finishing options, etc.). Secure printing with up to 100 mailboxes is supported

and the Windows 98 driver features "PageComposer," which gives users some document manipulation capabilities such as the ability to combine multiple files into one document and preview document layouts via thumbnail images of pages.

Bernard Lyons, BLI senior test technician, also cited the Canon imageRUNNER 5000's very intuitive and full-featured optional scan capability as a strength. The optional eCopy ScanStation consists of a server PC that runs the ShareScan software and a touch-screen display that attaches to the unit and serves as the user interface for scan functions. Users can scan to user desktops (folders on a network server), to fax machines or printers on the network, to e-mail addresses and to destinations via UPS's encrypted secure Internet delivery (requires an account with UPS). The eCopy system includes a 20-user license of eCopy Desktop software, which offers a wide range of editing and annotation tools and includes an OCR component.

Priced at \$17,000, the Canon imageRUNNER 5000 offers an above-average standard paper capacity of 4,150 sheets that can be expanded to 7,650 sheets—one of the highest maximum paper capacities available for units in this speed range (45 to 55 ppm); a standard reversing automatic document feeder with a capacity that, at 100 sheets, is higher than that of many units in this range; the ability to feed up to 110-lb. stock from all of its paper sources; a photoconductor yield that, at 3 million impressions, far exceeds the average for this speed range; a PM interval that is also longer than the average; and a choice of two finishers, including a two-tray finisher and the tested saddle-stitch finisher, which offers standard V-folding capability, as well as optional three-hole punch capability, and enables the production of booklets.

One of the best hardware choices in Segment 4, the Canon imageRUNNER 5000, as tested with its Multi-PDL Print Kit-A2, is highly recommended by BLI for monthly volumes ranging from 10,000 to 175,000 impressions per month.

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