

EDITOR'S CHOICE**XEROX PHASER**
3450/DN

With a print speed of 23ppm, the Xerox Phaser 3450/DN was by far the fastest printer in our group test making it the obvious choice for our Best Performance award.

Besides its thoroughly impressive speed and quality, the Xerox is also fitted with scores of useful features. Offering parallel, USB and ethernet ports, the Phaser is connectivity friendly, but it leapt ahead of the competition thanks to its built-in duplexer (for double sided prints). This was a feature that all of the other contenders simply didn't offer, either as standard or even as an upgrade. As the 3450/DN can also be upgraded with additional memory and a larger paper tray, it will also have no problems with dealing with far more taxing jobs and print environments.

The AcuLaser 2600N from Epson also held our interest with its impressive 21ppm print speed and quality outputs. We liked the fact that it could also be upgraded painlessly to perform colour prints and with a speedy processor and generous amounts of onboard memory, it's able to tackle bigger print jobs without breaking a sweat.

HOW WE TESTED...

The testing methodology employed by our WinLabs is as transparent as possible and involves a mix of objective and subjective tests.

Objective testing comes into play when looking at each printer's performance. We simply print our standard 20-page test document in normal quality (with no adjustments being made to drivers) and time how long this takes. We then use this formula to calculate a printer's page per minute score (ppm): 60 seconds x 20 pages / time taken to complete print job. The Samsung ML-1610 for

example took 90 seconds. The formula $60 \times 20 / 90$ gives us 13.33, which we round to 13ppm. Higher ppm numbers improve the performance score.

Subjective testing involves using a printer as much as possible. This means keeping a check on how noisy it is, plus we also check for signs of ozone odour, as this can make working in close proximity with a printer unpleasant. Printers that are quiet and free of ozone walked away with higher feature scores. More features for your money also leads to a better value score.

GROUPTEST Mono Laser Printers

XEROX PHASER 3450/DN

Slash paper costs with duplex printing

PRICE **\$650**

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Priced at \$650, the Phaser 3450/DN is one of the more expensive models in this test, but with good reason.

This Phaser bears the distinction you see of being the only laser here to feature a built-in automatic duplexer for double-sided printing. Furthermore, it offers a generous paper-in tray capacity of 550 sheets and this can be upgraded even further to 1,100 sheets (via an additional tray). The Xerox also offers strong connectivity options including parallel, USB and ethernet ports.

As Xerox expects the Phaser to be used in workgroups or small offices, the company has equipped it with a quick 266MHz processor and 32MB of buffer memory as standard. Should you require even more memory capacity, the Phaser can

be expanded up to 160MB.

The Xerox's cartridge is also fairly beefy; with a life expectancy of 5,000 pages it ties with Epson's AcuLaser 2600N and only really falls behind the Canon LBP-2000's 10,000 page cartridge life.

With a print time of only 53 seconds, the Phaser 3450/DN was blisteringly fast, achieving a speed of 23ppm. At the same time quality was excellent, with text appearing crisp and well pronounced with no signs of fuzziness. The printer was also free of any ozone odour though slightly audible in use.

PERFORMANCE	★★★★★
FEATURES	★★★★★
VALUE FOR MONEY	★★★★★

VERDICT Although the Phaser 3450 is a pricey investment, it makes up for this with its top-notch print performance and very lengthy feature list.