



Test Report

MULTIFUNCTIONAL PRODUCTS
Xerox CopyCentre/WorkCentre/WorkCentre Pro 55
55 PM / Segment 4
Copier/Printer/Fax/Scanner

GENERAL APPRAISAL



A 55-ppm multifunctional unit that comes standard with copy and network print functions and was also tested with walk-up fax and network scan functions, the Xerox WorkCentre Pro 55 proved to be a good overall performer in BLI's three-month evaluation, demonstrating reliability, excellent multitasking and ease of use, and good output quality—all for a price that's lower than average for comparably equipped models in the 50- to 60-ppm range.

The WorkCentre Pro 55 completed its 300,000-impression test with two service calls, for Mean Impressions Between Failures (MIBF)/Mean Impressions Between Service (MIBS) rates of 150,000 impressions, and it misfed 32 times, for a misfeed rate of one per 9,375 misfeeds, which is a higher rate than that of other Segment 4 models tested. Most misfeeds were easy to remove, however, in spite of the unit's compact size, because the modular components can be easily moved out of the way to allow access to misfeed areas. Also noteworthy is that this unit employs

user-replaceable components (including the drum [xerographic module], fuser module, document feed roller assembly and waste toner container)—a design that, while it requires more user intervention than most other multifunctional products tested in this range, eliminates the downtime associated with the service calls that would be required to replace these parts on other systems. Moreover, replacement of all the components, proved to be simple. The cost of the user-replaceable consumables is bundled into the cost of service contracts, which will likely still be desired by most buyers.

A productive unit in most modes, the WorkCentre Pro 55 offers overall efficiency rates that are competitive in simplex and 1:2 duplex copy modes, while overall efficiency in print mode is slightly above average in simplex mode and above average in duplex mode. Employing a print controller driven by a 433-MHz processor, the Xerox WorkCentre Pro 55 also performed well overall in the raster tests, efficiently processing most of the file types used in testing, demonstrating competitive first-print-out times for the Word, PageMaker, PDF and JPG files used in the tests. The unit's first-copy time from the platen, at 4.6 seconds, is among the fastest for tested Segment 4 models, while first-copy time from the document feeder is competitive.

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The Xerox WorkCentre Pro 55 also offers excellent multitasking capabilities. Testing revealed that multiple copy jobs, limited only by memory capacity (which was not reached in testing) can be programmed while a copy or print job is in progress. Also noteworthy is that another job can be programmed as soon as the programming of the previous job is complete, while originals are still being scanned. Moreover, a priority of 1 or 2 can be assigned to two of the functions in order to have these types of jobs take precedence over others. Output quality of the Xerox WorkCentre Pro 55 was also good, earning BLI's highest image quality rating for all types of output (text, line art, halftones and solids) evaluated in both print and copy modes.

Another strength of the Xerox WorkCentre Pro 55 is its excellent ease of use. An attractively designed unit that is very compact for its speed range, it features a distinctive dark blue panel in the back that indicates all the functions of the unit and a work surface to the left of the platen that serves as a resting place for users to organize their copies and originals. Unlike most systems, it allows for a left-to-right workflow, with documents fed into the feeder on the left side of the machine and picked up from the finisher on the right. The uncluttered control panel features an easy-to-read LCD touch screen with an intuitive menu system and a "help" function. Users can choose the default screen for the control panel. For example, in environments where users will frequently switch among a range of different functions, the "All Services" screen, which presents the user with all the different functions available, would be a good choice. The copier screen offers a good layout that presents users with all the features required for most typical

copy jobs from the main screen, without requiring them to access additional menus. The control panel also offers extensive status information on all jobs in queue (including the number of sets programmed and completed), as well as completed jobs, and enables walk-up users move their job to the head of queue with a single keystroke. In addition, a machine status key provides access to a wide range of device information, including the life of consumables and meter counts for each function, including meter counts by user.

In addition to the extensive information provided at the control panel, the Xerox WorkCentre Pro 55 offers good feedback to PC workstations via very well designed bidirectional print drivers that inform users at the point of need—right before they send their job—of such factors as the approximate amount of available paper or if a problem exists that would interfere with the production of a job. Whether or not an error condition exists, the user can click on the "Status" button on the driver screen to obtain additional information on device status. And although users don't receive pop-up print job completion notification, they can view lists of active jobs (to see where their job is in the queue) and completed jobs, along with status information, from the status screen within the driver. In addition, a good range of device and print job status is available from the Web utility (CentreWare Internet Services).

Connectivity

BLI test technicians also praised the Xerox WorkCentre Pro 55 for its highly automated procedures for setup on the network and installing the drivers on users' PCs. Indeed, BLI test tech-

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nicians found the installation procedures and drivers to be among the best, if not the best, seen to date in testing of multifunctional products. Configured standard with the network print controller, the Xerox WorkCentre Pro 55 includes Microsoft-certified PCL 5e, 6 and PostScript 3 (emulation) print drivers for Windows 98, 2000, NT 4.0, Me and XP, as well as the necessary PPDs for Macintosh operating systems. Installation of the drivers on Windows XP workstations is automated, as is installation on Windows 2000 workstations (provided there are no open utilities); the auto-install routine does not work for Windows 98 (an error is generated). Installation onto Windows 98 workstations was accomplished using the Windows Add Printer wizard. BLI test technicians liked the fact that multiple drivers can be installed at once (other multifunctional products require repeating the installation process for each different driver desired). Once the installation process is complete, any configured accessories are automatically detected and the information is available for viewing in the driver, without the user having to initiate the process, as is the case with some systems, or having to manually specify the configuration, which is the case with some other systems. The PCL and PostScript drivers are very similar in appearance and functionality (with the only differences being those that are typically found between PCL and PostScript) and are very easy to use, although one criticism cited was that while most commonly used features can be selected from the main screen, quantity must be selected from a separate screen.

In addition to offering the previously mentioned status information, including a paper gauge, and most of the features that would be expected of a

unit in this range, such as secure print and proof print, the drivers offer delayed print, the ability to select a banner page (alternatively, service can enable generation of banner sheets from the controller), job review, accounting (optional; when enabled, the user must enter a code in order to print) and a choice of enhanced resolution modes in addition to 600-x-600-dpi resolution. Direct printing of a range of file types, including TIFF and PDF, is possible without needing to open the application. Also supported is IP printing, whereby from the embedded Web page, users can submit print-ready PCL or PostScript files for printing.

Configured as tested with options, the Xerox WorkCentre Pro 55 supports scan to e-mail and scan to network-connected PCs via FTP, which performed well in the tests. The scan function is integrated, with no additional hardware (such as a server) required. The system supports LDAP, so walk-up users can access e-mail addresses residing on a corporate mail server directly from the control panel of the WorkCentre Pro 55, eliminating the need to manually enter such addresses. Destinations can also be entered on the fly at the control panel via a QWERTY touch-screen keypad; e-mail destinations cannot, however, be stored on the device. Also supported is network authentication, a security feature that requires users to log in with their network user name and passcode in order to access the scan function. Scan-to-file destinations are set up in templates via the Web utility. The procedure was very simple, requiring entry of a file destination and format for the scan and assigning it a name that will appear on the control panel. The Scan to PC Desktop Deluxe software option includes Image Retriever software, which runs minimized on us-

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ers' workstations and checks for incoming scanned files, either notifying users of received scans via pop-up message or automatically opening scanned images into PaperPort Deluxe 8.0 (a 25-user license is provided). PaperPort also allows editing of the scanned images with annotations, highlighting and cropping among others, as well as OCRing of text documents.

Administration of the device on the network is accomplished via the CentreWare Internet Services Web utility, which is very easy to use, thanks in part to an exceptional help function. In addition to allowing configuration of device settings and creation of scan-to-folder destinations, the Web utility also provides a good range of information, including error messages, paper status, consumables gauges and meter counts for copies, prints, scans and receptions, including counts by user. Also offered is CentreWare Web, which allows monitoring and management of multiple output devices on the network (not just Xerox models).

This versatile unit also supports optional 33.6-Kbps walk-up fax, a capability not always offered by units in this range. Its performance as a fax, as tested with the fax option, was also good, with the unit demonstrating a competitive scan-to-memory speed of 2.02 seconds per page and good procedures for transmitting from memory after a failed communication. A choice of fax options is offered, one with support for a single phone line and one with support for two (the option tested, which enables simultaneous transmission and reception and effectively doubles capacity). Both offer a competitive feature set. The WorkCentre Pro 55 also supports integration with network fax servers offered by

Xerox partners. When so configured, walk-up fax is automatically enabled on the device without requiring purchase of the walk-up fax option. When the unit is configured in this manner, walk-up and network faxes are routed to the fax server, which handles all transmissions and receptions for the enterprise. Also offered, but not tested on this configuration, is Internet fax capability.

Other features of the Xerox WorkCentre Pro 55 include several that are not usually offered by models in this range, such as the ability to produce up 9,999 copies in a single run (most competitors can make up to 999 in a single run); 2,150 copy control codes (the highest number for units in this speed range); and a large 320-MB RAM (expandable to 512 MB), which is higher than that of most competitors. Although the copy function lacks a hard drive and does not enable electronic storage of hardcopy documents on the device for printing on demand from the control panel, the print controller has a 9.1-GB hard drive, plus a separate 128 MB of memory. Noteworthy is that the WorkCentre Pro 55 accommodates from 16-lb. bond to 110-lb. index from the paper drawers as well as the bypass. The output options available include the tested office finisher, which holds 2,250 sheets and staples up to 50 sheets per set in multiple positions. Three-hole and two-hole punch are also offered as options. Other noteworthy options include the security overwrite option, which protects information stored on the device by overwriting it either at specified times or on demand; and Copier Assistant software, which is designed to make it easier for users who are visually impaired, have limited dexterity or use a wheelchair to access and use the system. It provides users with an

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alternative to the standard touch-screen controls, displaying an enlarged user interface on a PC and featuring text-to-speech capability that walks users through copying steps.

Shortcomings

Testing revealed the following shortcomings of the Xerox WorkCentre Pro 55: 1) Overall efficiency in the 2:2 copy mode is below the average for Segment 4 models tested to date. 2) The processing time for the TIFF file used in BLI's raster tests is slower than average. 3) The only finisher offered for this unit is the tested finisher. Most models in this speed range are offered with a choice of finishers, including a saddle-stitch finisher to allow the production of finished booklets. 4) The unit's standard and maximum paper capacities, at 1,200 sheets and 4,800 sheets, respectively, as well as its document feeder capacity, at 75 sheets, are below average for models in this speed range. 5) When printing, users can pull from only one paper drawer for any one print job, so for example, users cannot choose to print the first page of a document on letterhead and the remainder of the document on plain stock loaded in another drawer. 6) While not difficult, the need to always press a key to confirm the paper size after opening the paper drawer, even if just loading paper of the same size, was found to be an inconvenience. Moreover, if a user forgets to confirm the size, any waiting print or copy jobs will be held up. This requirement does provide the advantage, however, of letting users accurately know the color, type and size of paper in each drawer from the driver and the control panel.

Pricing Analysis And Summary

BLI's retail pricing analysis reveals that the Xerox WorkCentre Pro 55 is priced lower than the average for comparably equipped multifunctional models in the 50- to 60-ppm speed range. In fact, it is one of the lowest-priced models in this group. While toner cost per page is competitive with the average for Segment 4 units tested to date, complete cost per page for supplies could not be calculated, since Xerox factors the cost of xerographic modules and other consumables into service contracts.

Based on its good overall performance in the tests, especially its exceptional print drivers and excellent ease of use and multitasking, BLI recommends the Xerox WorkCentre Pro 55 for offices in need of a multifunctional product with copy, print, scan and fax functions for monthly volumes of up to 125,000 impressions.

Note: According to documentation provided by Xerox, a new right panel was incorporated into production in late November 2003 to address a manufacturing issue observed in a small percentage of units (slight bowing of the door, causing it to come in contact with the inverter shaft, resulting in noise and possible misfeeding). According to Xerox, service technicians have been instructed to trim the tabs on the panel should this issue be encountered.

Copy Quality:

Text: Good
 Line art: Good
 Halftones: Good
 Solids: Good

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General Appraisal *continued***Print Quality:****Text:** **Good****Line art:** **Good****Halftones:** **Good****Solids:** **Good****Ease of use:** **Good****Ease of maintenance:** **Good****Estimated waste:** **Low****Estimated downtime:** **Low****Misfeeds:** **32****Misfeed rate:** **1 per 9,375 impressions****Total service calls****(including PMs):** **2****MIBF:** **150,000 impressions****MIBS:** **150,000 impressions**

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