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OFFICE IMAGING PRODUCTS 2003: BLI'S PICKS OF THE YEAR

During the testing period for this year's awards, which ran from the summer of 2002 to the late spring of 2003, more than 120 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 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 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 2010F w/Printer Board-N1 *Outstanding Segment 1 Multifunctional Imaging System, 2003*

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Canon imageRUNNER 2010F

A clear favorite of BLI technicians among the Segment 1 units tested this past year, the Canon imageRUNNER 2010F has been awarded a BLI "Pick of the Year" for "Outstanding Segment 1 Multifunctional Imaging System, 2003." In addition to demonstrating reliability, completing its 75,000-impression BLI test—one of the highest volumes for Segment 1 units tested—with one service call and seven misfeeds, for a misfeed rate of one per 10,714 impressions, this 20-ppm unit is an outstanding overall performer that exhibited superior multitasking capabilities, good efficiency and excellent economy during BLI's three-month evaluation, earning it BLI's "Highly Recommended" rating. A versatile unit, the Canon imageRUNNER 2010F, as tested with the Printer Board-N1, provides standard copy, fax and PC fax capabilities, as well as optional network print, scan and LAN fax capabilities. Contributing to the versatility of this simplex-

only unit is its support for up to 11" x 17" output and its optional space-saving internal finisher, which offsets output and enhances overall efficient operation.

Noted Ken Nardone, BLI's supervisor of product testing, "What's particularly impressive about the imageRUNNER 2010F is that it offers so much functionality—to include the availability of finishing, print drivers that automatically detect the device's configuration, support for 11" x 17" output,

PostScript as well as PCL printing, and the list goes on—all for a below-average cost. And an even more important advantage is that its cost per page for supplies is among the lowest for Segment 1 units tested to date. Clearly, this model offers outstanding value to buyers.”

Distinguishing the imageRUNNER 2010F from most of its competitors in this range are excellent multitasking capabilities that allow users to program additional copy jobs while another copy and/or print job is in progress. This capability is not commonly found on models in this range and contributes to this unit’s good overall productivity. Indeed, the imageRUNNER 2010F offers good overall efficiency rates in both copy and print modes and output quality was good overall. In addition, BLI technicians commented that, unlike some products in this range, the well-designed imageRUNNER 2010F has a sensor that detects when the output tray capacity has been reached, at which point output stops, preventing misfeeding.

Configured as tested with the optional Printer Board-N1 and optional 10/100BaseT Ethernet interface, the imageRUNNER 2010F also functioned well as a 600-x-600-dpi printer. With an auto-install utility for the drivers and for the NetSpot administrative utility, the imageRUNNER 2010F was easy to set up and the print drivers were well-designed and easy to use. Noteworthy is that the bundled PCL 5e driver for Windows 98

and 2000 automatically detects and displays the device configuration, eliminating the need for the administrator to manually specify the configuration. Also noteworthy is that excluding first-print-out time, it output all of the file types tested, including the TIF and PDF files, at its rated engine speed. Other notable features include the ability to move a job up in the queue and to print the date and user name on a print job.

The unit also performed well as a 33.6-Kbps fax, displaying good procedures for transmitting from memory after a failed communication and a competitive 3.25-second-per-page BLI-tested scan speed. Fax features include JBIG compression, 2 MB of dedicated fax memory that can be upgraded to 57 MB, broadcasting, transfer hub capability and battery backup. Furthermore, a dual-line option (33.6-Kbps modem) is available, which would effectively double capacity for transmissions and receptions. The unit’s LAN faxing and scan to e-mail functions also performed very well in testing and were easy to program and use. Though not tested, scan to file is also supported.

“It’s very rare that we find a copier-based product in Segment 1 that offers such good multitasking, efficiency and finishing capabilities,” noted Pete Emory, BLI’s supervisor of lab operations. Representing one of the best values of tested Segment 1 units, the Canon imageRUNNER 2010F, priced at \$4,550, is highly recommended by BLI for offices in need of a multifunctional product for monthly volumes of up to 25,000 impressions.

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