

# Refilled Inkjet Cartridges Prove Unreliable

## Consumers Be Wary, Particularly When Printing Photos

(NAPSA)—Within the last few years, photo printers have become widely available at affordable mass market price points, making it possible for consumers to print high-quality photos at home. In fact, according to InfoTrends/CAP Ventures, 94 percent of digital camera owners who print photos made at least some of their prints at home in 2004.

Consumers are turning to home photo printing because it's convenient, simple and cost-effective; they can print photos at home for as little as 24 cents per print using HP printers, and special ink and photo paper Photo Packs.

Although inkjet print cartridges are designed for single use, some consumers may be lured to consider refilling their used inkjet print cartridges themselves or taking them to a refill shop. Cartridge refill shops allow consumers to bring in empty inkjet print cartridges to either be refilled while the consumer waits, or swapped for a recently refilled cartridge.

"Consumers shouldn't be fooled by these seemingly less expensive cartridges," said John Solomon, vice president of marketing and sales, for Hewlett-Packard's Imaging and Printing Supplies Organization. "While refilled inkjet cartridges may seem less expensive at the point of sale, they routinely fare poorly in terms of print quality and reliability, which adds to the overall cost of printing.

"Rather than just focusing on the purchase price, consumers need to look at how print quality and reliability impacts expenses over time," he continued. "For example, a lesser-quality cartridge that makes re-printing necessary wastes paper. A leaky cartridge that requires constant refills wastes time, and could damage the printer."

QualityLogic, Inc., an indepen-



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dent quality assurance testing company, tested more than 200 refilled cartridges purchased from leading refill shops across North America. On average, more than 60 percent of refilled inkjet cartridges tested had reliability problems. Issues QualityLogic encountered with refilled cartridges include a high volume of unusable pages, loss of color, and printer problems caused by faulty cartridges.

Although refill shops claim to be able to refill virtually every cartridge, QualityLogic found that refill shops were unable to refill 16 percent of cartridges they brought in to be refilled. Refill shops also claim to be able to refill a cartridge in as little as 20 minutes. In reality, when QualityLogic returned to the shops at the appointed time, the refilled cartridges were not ready as promised 37 percent of the time.

Also, consumers are disappointed when photos printed with refilled inkjet cartridges begin fading almost immediately. Not only is this frustrating, it's a waste of money. "The last thing a consumer would want to have happen is to have a treasured photo fade because it was printed using a re-used cartridge," said Solomon.

Many consumers are aware that traditional photographs can

fade or discolor over the years. Very bright light can fade or change the colors in the photograph within a decade or less; even photos stored in an album can eventually turn yellow due to temperature effects. Fortunately, inkjet photographs can safely resist fade and discoloration for many decades in an album or displayed, but only if consumers choose the right combination of high-quality inks and photo papers that have been engineered to work with their particular printer.

Consumers should look for the Wilhelm Imaging Research "Certification Seal," which will soon be highly visible on photo paper packaging for leading manufacturers that have undergone rigorous testing to obtain Wilhelm's seal of approval. For example, test results from Wilhelm Imaging Research prove that photos printed on HP Premium Plus Photo Paper using HP Vivera Inks (6-, 8-, and 9-ink Photosmart printers) resist fading for more than 100 years.

Choosing the right photo paper is important, too. High-quality photo paper has a specially formulated coating to prevent paper jams, paper curl, and printed pages sticking together. Chemicals in high-quality ink combine with the advanced coating to form a protective barrier against light, ensuring the image lasts for years to come.

Because photo papers and inks are designed to work together to resist fading, consumers will only be able to ensure their memories last a lifetime if they print their photos on the photo paper that is designed to work with the long-lasting inks. For this reason, it's best to use the products recommended by the manufacturer. For more information go to [http://h30015.www3.hp.com/hp\\_sop/photo\\_printing/fade\\_resistance.asp](http://h30015.www3.hp.com/hp_sop/photo_printing/fade_resistance.asp).