

Small wonder: OKI ES9410 printer

OKI has beefed up its small A3+ LED colour toner engine for longer duty cycles and launched it in to the print for pay market. *Simon Eccles* tries it out.

OKI's range of colour toner printers are hard to categorise at first. They look like ordinary office printers, and indeed that's what some of them are, but the top models are heavy duty workhorses that handle media and sizes that even high end digital production printers can't manage. They can take thick or heavily textured card up to at least 300 g/m², or high gloss coated papers and some plastics as well as cheap copier paper, or banners up to 1.2 metres long. They make credible low cost proofers – OKI can supply the EFI Colorproof XF RIP.

OKI engines are also the basis of OEM engines with different badges – that sculpted top surface and flip up control panels is always a giveaway. For instance Xanté uses an OKI A3+ engine as the basis of its Illumina 502 printer, which it persuades to accept card up to a remarkable 502 g/m². It also adds high pile feeders and conveyors to these, as the Illumina Digital Production Press GT and Illumina Digital Label Press.

Total PrePress uses an OKI C9000 series engine as the basis of its Digital Envelope Press, adding a high pile feeder and a conveyer or delivery (*Digital Printer December 2009*).

OKI's product range is so large that it's hard to follow at first, especially as it has families of models with versions that all look the same apart from a number on the side.

The heavy duty models are called the Executive Series, which have their own website and UK reseller network.

We've been trying the latest Executive model, ES9410, for the past month. It will make its first public appearance on the OKI stand at Ipex (**Hall 12 C110**).

This is a highly affordable model (priced from £5999), aimed at commercial print for pay users, typically small print shops who need to do short run jobs on a variety of media. These could be menu cards, business cards, counter signs, pre-creased folders and



With the cover up you can see the flat paper path under the toner cartridges.

covers, small banners, all the sorts of things that a jobbing printer might be asked for.

Compared with the office/graphics oriented OKI C9000 series, the ES9410 features beefed up components, a new toner and image drums, and Graphics Pro colour management. It's built for monthly volumes of 3000 to 10000 pages, the company says, with 'dependable page after page consistency'.



The standard paper tray takes up to 530 sheets of paper from A6 to A3+ sizes.

It fits in the Executive Series between the ES3460a3, and the ES3460pro (which has an embedded EFI Fiery Controller).

The maximum tray format of SRA3 means that you can print full bleed on trimmed A3/A4 items. It can take cut sheets down to A6 in the standard paper tray. A single tray is fitted as standard in the base of the printer and can hold up to 530 sheets (80 g/m²), but up to two more can be added.

The printer's new ProQ2400 image quality system provides multi-level output at 1200 x 600 dpi. You can also select other quality levels for office graphics or to save toner.

This is a network printer with a Gigabit Ethernet port and a built in web server for remote administration and uploading of PDF files. Alternatively there's a USB 2.0 port if you want to use the front end running the RIP as the print server. A 40 GB hard drive and 512 MB of RAM are standard, with the option to increase this to 1024 MB.

The ES9410 has a PostScript driver rather than a RIP, but it is compatible with the latest EFI Colourproof XF 4.1 and Fiery XF production RIPs, with an optional multi-level driver for proofing work.

As mentioned the price starts at £5999. Additional accessories include second and third paper trays at £590 each, a high capacity feeder at £895, and a cabinet to hold the trays and support the printer, for £179.

More advanced users may want one of the finishing options. A four or five tray saddle stitch finisher and inverter costs £2600, and two or four hole punches cost £200.

There are four toner cartridges, with a nominal yield of about 15,000 pages. Changing them is easy and clean: the whole top of the printer hinges up and each cartridge is then unlocked by turning a front lever.

Opening the top reveals the secret of the printer's flexibility. The imaging/fusing path is completely flat, with four LED imaging heads and the four toner cartridges above a belt



very nice creative effects that should appeal to designers.

The print speed is a nominal 31 A4 colour pages per minute in black, or 35 in colour. For A3 it's 16 per minute in black and 12 in colour. A fast processor coupled with the high speed Ethernet means that you don't usually have to wait long for the first print. And after that it's happy to churn away all day.

Indeed, such was the quality were getting on Color Copy that we seriously considered setting up a few of these printers to do our 8000+ run front cover this month just to prove it was possible, albeit with UV coating afterwards: sadly deadlines got in the way.

The only criticism we have of this printer is that it's fairly noisy in a small office. When it's in sleep mode it's completely silent, but when it starts to warm up for print it's loud, and the fan stays loud for about ten minutes after the last print is delivered.

In conclusion, the OKI ES9410 is a highly versatile light production printer/proofer. You obviously wouldn't buy it for high throughput, but if you're a small printer who needs to offer a wide and unpredictable variety of print on sometimes exotic media, as well as paper of all grades and weights, it's worth a careful look. Larger printers might find it useful too, for the sort of paper weights and finishes that their big digital machines won't touch. ■

OKI ES9410

Price: £5999 with one tray

Speeds (A3): 16 ppm colour, 20 ppm mono

Speeds (A4): 31 ppm colour, 36 ppm mono

Print quality: 1200 x 600 dpi with ProQ2400 multi-level technology

Languages: PCL5e, PCL XL (colour), PostScript 3, Direct PDF print, SIDM

Paper: A6 to SRA3, up to 300 g/m²

Duplex: standard

Hard disk: 40 GB

Memory: 512 MB, with 1024 MB max

Dimensions: 471 x 655 x 623 mm

Weight: 81 kg

Contact: www.okiexecutiveseries.co.uk

Tel: 0800 917 6015

unit. If you open the fold-out multi-purpose tray on the right (looking from the control panel) you can add non-standard media without changing the main tray, and if you open the bypass door at the other end you can feed thicker cards in a completely flat path from start to finish. Normal thicknesses of paper follow an S-shaped path from the tray, through the print unit and up and out through the top delivery slot. The tray is for weights from 64 to 200 g/m², though apparently it's

best to keep to a maximum of 180 g/m² for auto duplexing (which is standard).

Our printer was supplied with a sample pack of unusual media, including cast coated art paper, pearlescent coated paper, textured papyrus type material, pre-creased menu card, laser-safe labels and pre-cut shapes. It can also image suitable plastic offset plates. We also tried it with cheap 80 g/m² copier paper from Ryman, mid-range Xerox High White 80 g/m² Copy Paper, and high grade 100 g/m² Mondi Color Copy. It performed faultlessly with whatever we fed it.

The photographic image quality was very good on smooth coated papers, with good gloss matching on the smooth and high gloss papers. You wouldn't need to laminate just to smooth the appearance, though you'd probably want to for menu cards and the like.

While the ES9410 can't match a good inkjet for ultimate photographic reproduction, it's certainly good enough for most purposes, especially if you tweak the colour management or use a RIP – we found the standard profile gave slightly dark results with the printer driver. The Graphic Pro print setting lets you access profiles of your own that you've created and downloaded to the printer's hard disk.

Used with some of the more exotic coated or textured papers, this printer can give



Admin and PDF file uploading can be done through any networked web browser.