

# Things to consider when buying a new Designjet

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The two primary things to consider when purchasing a new Designjet are:

- (1) what is your available budget - and
- (2) what do you need your printer to achieve - both now and in 2-5 years time

Your Designjet needs to be able to undertake the tasks required of it now, as well as any possible future requirements. If you don't have sufficient budget for a brand new Designjet then it is usually unwise to settle for a machine based on price rather than performance. There are always good refurbished models (selling at the fraction of the cost of brand new Designjets) - or models that have just been made end of life 'EOL' which are also significantly cheaper than brand new printers. HP undertake to support all EOL models for 5 years in terms of manufacturing parts etc which means that in 1 years time you're not going to own a machine no longer supported or repairable. Another option would be to look at mid to long term rental until you're in a position to buy.

If your budget dictates that you are unable to purchase a brand new printer (and finance doesn't work for you) you ultimately have to purchase a machine which prints what you need it to print. If you purchase a new Designjet which isn't what you really need, you're going to end up with an expensive doorstop.

Having got the two basic premises out of the way, it is always useful to do your own research and get an idea of how the machine performs within your particular industry. Ask around. Speak to us (we'll always give you an honest answer).

If you know nothing about Designjets, then broadly speaking the T series Designjets are technical machines designed for Architects, Engineering and those in the Building industry - whereas the Z series are designed more for the Photographic and Fine Art business sectors. The 510s are technical printers and, whilst not as functionally rich as the T or Z series make excellent workhorses at a competitive price. The low end 1xx series (Designjet 111s and 130s) are designed for the entry market/home users/small offices where space is at a premium.

All printers have plus points and minus points. What the 1xx series lack in robust build quality, they make up for in price and performance and smaller footprint. Whilst the 510s lack ePrint ability

compared to the T series, they represent excellent value for money. What the T and Z series lack in simplicity of build (making many repairs very difficult for the layperson) they make up in their superior print capabilities. When you compare the highly popular Designjet 1050 series (EOL) these are veritable workhorses with little to go wrong on them - so good in fact that we always used them as our rental machines because they're not as sensitive as the newest/latest high tech models but equally they are harder to set up/use and not as fast in performance. In some ways you can liken printers to cars. Older cars are simpler builds where you can strip an engine and put it back together the right way and 'voila' you're ready to go! The newer cars however are faster and smarter and do more things – but they are built with engine management systems that need to be plugged into specialist machines in order to optimise them. They can't be tinkled with the same as older cars. This is the way of printers too.

Once you're happy you're on the right track, you may wish to ask the supplier if you can see the machine in action - if you want to feel more comfortable with your purchase. Perhaps take your own laptop and typical files that you might print on a 'day to day basis' and run a small batch of test prints - to ensure you are happy with the final results. Ask searching questions like: "if I have trouble setting up the machine after it's delivered, can you help me?". Ascertain if you are dealing with box shifters who once they process your order will quickly guide you to the HP helpline for any problems - or whether they will provide you with a good after sales service and will try to help get you up and running quickly (if that's what you want!).

If we assume that you are not only looking at HP Designjets, then a useful exercise is to Google the printer that you're interested in, to find out who can repair it post-warranty. Do you have many choices? What is the cost of repair? Next, Google the search term "HP Designjet Repairs".

Quite often competitors' large format printers are similarly priced to a HP unit - but the long term cost of ownership (ink/paper/printhead/support contract costs) combined with double/treble adhoc repair costs soon make them less attractive in the long run. Next, look at long term cost of ink and paper. If you have a large requirement for a *number* of Designjets, it will be even more important to look at overall cost of ownership. For volume purchases we are able to arrange for HP to undertake a site inspection for you to ensure that the selected Designjets represents the best possible cost saving to your business when compared against a competitors' product. Let them go head to head so you can make a more informed decision.

We hope that this article has given you some food for thought and look forward to assisting you.