

Sights & Sounds of Multimedia

George Harding

Lexmark S505 Printer

There are few advertisements these days that do not feature printers from several manufacturers. Lexmark is not the biggest advertiser, but their printers are high class.

I was given a model S505 to test. This is a handsome black unit that will print, scan and copy. Many printers do all of these things. This printer, however, adds several interesting features to its basic lineup. One is wireless capability. When you set up the printer, you first connect it to your computer with a USB cable for the computer to recognize the printer.

Once that step is completed, you remove the cable and let the software search for your wireless network. In my case, it found my network and connected to it with no hitches.

What's more, you can install the printer software in other computers and have each search for the Lexmark printer, connect and then be able to print to it wirelessly. It's really a convenience to be able to print from any computer with no wires.

The printer has a small LCD screen, which you can use to control various functions such as copying and scanning. The screen lets you select number of copies, change the print quality, make the print darker or lighter and change paper size easily. The screen has an auxiliary toggle control for left/right/up/down to use for making selections.

This printer stays active while you are using it and for a period thereafter. After that, it goes into "sleep:" mode. You wake it up by sending something to be printed, or by pressing the



On/Off button. You turn the printer off by pressing and holding the On/Off button.

Copying and scanning are done using the glass scanner bed. There is no document feeder, only the flat-bed scanner. You control these operations with either the LCD screen or from your computer.

The Lexmark printer Home application on your computer offers control of copying and scanning and includes the possibility of scanning to PDF, a handy tool. The software also includes ABBYY Finereader, an OCR application. OCR software changes your scanned document into an editable one.

I tried out both the PDF facility and the OCR facility. The scan to PDF facility worked flawlessly! The test document has different font sizes and colors, images, lines of various densities and a few symbols. The PDF document included every one of these exactly.

For the OCR test, I used a page of text with a table, lines of different widths, some italicized words and boldface. The editable text was perfect, as far as I could tell.

This printer is capable of double-sided printing. This is a one-pass capability, rather than what you and I would do – run the paper through twice, probably the wrong way. The paper prints on the first side, backs up, then prints the second side. The printing can be either side-to-side or top-to-top. Marvelous!

There is a USB slot for a flash drive; you can print your pictures or documents directly from that drive, with no computer involvement. Likewise, there is a slot for memory cards and sticks of many kinds.

The print cartridges are four in number: black, yellow, magenta and cyan. The black cartridge is larger than the other three. I had some difficulty inserting the cartridges at first. The Quick Reference Guide does not describe in any detail how to do this task.

The printer has a three-year warranty by Lexmark and lifetime phone support.

Quibbles: the Quick Start Guide is far from extensive. It leaves out a few important steps, like when to plug in the power cord, how and when to install print cartridges.

Works on many versions of Windows and Mac.

About: Lexmark S505 Printer

Vendor: Lexmark
www.lexmark.com

Price: \$149 direct

Verbatim Nano Wireless Mouse

You probably think you don't need a new mouse for your notebook, right? Well, think again! This Nano mouse is really slick!

First of all, it's wireless, which eliminates the cord. That may not be such a big thing, because you're very much used to having your mouse tethered. But when you try out a wireless mouse, you'll find you really like it.

There is a tiny USB plug that has no cord on it that goes into a USB socket, as usual. It is so small, though, that you won't realize it's there. When you travel, the receiver can be stored in the base of the mouse.

The mouse is quite well designed, with a comfortable feel and responsive touch. The rubberized surface is appealing to both right- and left-handers.

What's in the box: Nano mouse, 2 AAA batteries, USB receiver, software CD and Quick Start Guide.

The Quick Start Guide is very brief. It points out all features of the top of the mouse as well as the bottom. The rest is a series of 3 steps: install batteries, plug in receiver, use mouse. It doesn't take a lot of intelligence or computer savvy to set this up!

The mouse powers itself off after a short period of activity, but comes to life when a button is pressed. It can be powered off by storing the receiver in the back of the mouse.



The roller button (aka scroll wheel) can be programmed to perform certain functions, but is a scroll wheel by default. For those who care about color, this mouse comes in seven different colors!

The device is easy to install and use. What could be better? And, it works with Windows and Mac.

About: Verbatim Nano Wireless Mouse

Vendor: Verbatim
www.verbatim.com

Price: About \$30 (less at some retailers)

Tiger Eyes Earphones

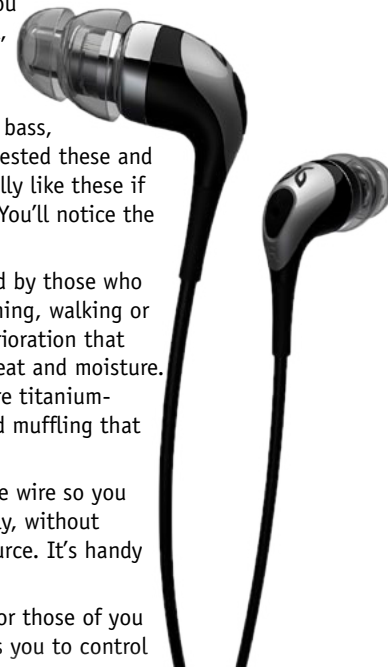
Earbuds are everywhere, why would you want to pay \$89 for another set? Well, there are several reasons.

First, these produce wonderful sound. The company description says, "warm bass, crystal clear clarity and presence." I tested these and found the claims to be true. You'll really like these if you listen to FM or CD quality music. You'll notice the difference right away.

Second, these are designed to be used by those who exercise while listening, whether running, walking or cycling. You may not realize the deterioration that occurs over time with exposure to sweat and moisture. The diaphragms in these earphones are titanium-coated, to avoid the deterioration and muffling that occurs.

Third, there is a volume control on the wire so you can increase/decrease the sound easily, without having to deal with volume at the source. It's handy and easy.

And fourth, there is another control for those of you that have an iPod or iPhone. It allows you to control



the playback of recorded music. One click is Play/Pause, two clicks equals Next track, and three clicks gives you Back Track.

Lastly, there is a microphone included for calls on an iPhone. The volume control works here, too.

That should be enough for anyone! The company provides a lifetime warranty against sweat, gives free shipping and a 60 day satisfaction guarantee.

About: Tiger Eyes Earphones

Vendor: Jaybird
www.jaybirdgear.com

Price: \$89 direct