



Brother MFC-J5330DW

A great-value, versatile printer with affordable running costs for smaller offices and homes

SCORE ★★★★★

PRICE £99 (£119 inc VAT)
from printerland.co.uk

For all its mild-mannered, boring office printer looks, the Brother MFC-J5330DW conceals a few surprises. Not only does it punch above its weight when it comes to speed, but it comes with a handy hidden talent. Pack it with A4 paper and it prints using a strange, sideways paper path – okay, not particularly exciting in itself. If, however, you pull out the paper tray, press a plastic button and extend it, you can pack in A3 sheets as well, giving you the option of A3 printing without the size penalty of the real deal.

Nevertheless, this isn't what you would call a compact printer. The desktop footprint of 530 x 398mm leaves it looking larger than some colour lasers, and that's before you extend the input and output trays to their full extent. It does, however, feel well built – and with a 250-sheet cassette and a 100-sheet output tray, there's enough capacity for most home and small-office users. It can handle a recommended monthly duty cycle of up to 2,000 pages per month.

The Brother also crams in some useful connections, including USB 2, Ethernet and 802.11n Wi-Fi, not to mention another USB port and an SD card slot at the front. It's compatible with Apple AirPrint, Google Cloud Print and can print and scan directly to and from a range of major cloud-based services, including Dropbox, Evernote, OneNote and Facebook. A full version of Nuance PaperPort is supplied to handle scanning and OCR, although the promotion of Brother's OmniJoin online meeting service during setup is annoying.

The 6.8cm resistive touchscreen isn't the biggest, brightest or most responsive, but despite this configuring the printer and its wireless connections isn't a challenge, and the printer prints its own installation instructions once it's plugged in and



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the cartridges and paper have been installed. If you spend as much time working with a smartphone or tablet as you do a conventional PC, you'll find Brother's iPrint and Scan mobile app intuitive and effective, making it easy to print photos direct from your phone – or scan, share and email using your device.

Compared to consumer inkjets at a similar price, the Brother is something of a speed demon. Where they took upwards of 15 seconds to print out the first page of our colour report, the Brother managed this feat within eight seconds and had the whole shebang done and dusted within 50. With colour printing at 6.2ppm and black-and-white at 16.7ppm, it's inching towards serious business printer performance, not consumer-

ABOVE The Brother MFC-J5330DW feels well built and has a 100-sheet output tray



BELOW The 6.8cm touchscreen may not be the biggest or most responsive, but setting up the printer is straightforward

grade. Yes, the business lasers and inkjets hit higher speeds of 24ppm and beyond, but they can cost twice as much, if not more. Duplex printing drops the speed to 9.4ppm, but even that's faster than most people need.

Quality, meanwhile, is respectable. Black text doesn't match the clarity or definition of the more expensive business inkjets, let alone the lasers, but photos still look surprisingly good, both on plain paper and on glossy photo paper. The Brother can produce more vibrant colours than many rivals and do a better job of distinguishing the very lightest and darkest colour tones. Skin tones can look a little pale, but the presentation is more natural and subtle. Business charts and illustrations also look particularly good, even when printed at A3 sizes. While colour accuracy isn't perfect, the Brother could make a good, cheap printer for proofing layouts or even printing marketing materials. As a bonus, it's surprisingly quiet in use.

This is a great, versatile printer with an extremely tempting price tag, and it won't cost the earth to run. Buy the XL cartridges and black-and-white pages drop to just 1p per page while even colour pages come in at just 4.2p. That makes the total cost for 5,000 pages lower than almost any of its rivals, with the difference only getting bigger over time. Provided you have the space to accommodate it, this is a great printer both for home and small-scale office use.

