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Abstract

New Technology Developments May Boost Inkjet Printer Market

Report Fast Facts

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New ink-based page-printing technologies from Memjet and Brother that are planned to be introduced within the next year have the potential to disrupt the competitive landscape of the inkjet printer market. This analysis takes a closer look at the technology behind these new products and discusses possible market implications.

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Introduction

Inkjet printers have become a prevalent device in U.S. households and offices, with a 2007 installed base of nearly 124 million units. It is a mature and saturated market, but there are opportunities for growth under the right circumstances. Inkjet printer manufacturers jumped quickly onto the digital camera bandwagon by converting general-purpose printers and all-in-ones into “photo-centric” models with the addition of features such as onboard memory-card readers, LCDs, and PictBridge capability. Riding the coattails of the digital camera market was good while it lasted, but due to the slowing of growth in digital camera sales, increased market saturation of photo-centric models, and the shift in digital photo printing volume from home to retail, the home printer market is once again facing the challenge of flat and even declining sales.

While improvements in the print speeds and ink quality of consumer-level printers have been made over the last five years, there have been few major advancements that have the potential to disrupt the status quo in the market. That may change over the next year, however, as technology developments are on the way. Memjet and Brother plan to introduce products that promise to dramatically increase print speeds while retaining print quality and allow for a competitive selling price. A positive reaction from the implementation of these new technologies in consumer products may lead HP to consider developing its Edgeline technology (resident only in office and retail photo printing products at this time) for consumer products, and this may also catalyze similar advancements from other leading printer vendors.

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