

2005 Award Winner



10th Annual Awards

Best 20 to 29 ppm Monochrome Office MFP

Sharp AR-M237 Digital IMAGER



BERTL has awarded the 2005 BERTL's Best Award for the Best 20 to 29 ppm Monochrome Office MFP to the Sharp AR-237 Digital IMAGER for its competitively priced features that include an easy-to-use console interface, personal desktop management software, and advanced security.

On paper, the Sharp AR-237 is a 23 ppm copier MFP that comes with a 100-sheet reversing ADF, 48MB RAM, and 1200 dpi laser output. But even with the basic configuration and core MFP features, the Sharp AR-M237 excels, going the extra mile with enhancements typically found in more expensively priced devices.

While other similar devices force you to purchase an optional PCL controller, Sharp's thrifty out-of-the box, host-based printing lets users print at up to 1200 x 600 dpi resolution. Host-based printing can be associated with larger print files, but Sharp AR-M237 employs clever JBIG compression technology to reduce bandwidth requirements and speed up response time. Also helping matters in the non-networked version is the device's USB 2.0 connection, which is capable of transmitting data at up to 480MB per second.

BERTL analysts have noted that the minimum drill-down console interface is the same across the Sharp product line, and therefore lets users familiar with other Sharp IMAGER devices quickly get the job done: users experienced with one Sharp device can get up to speed on the Sharp AR-M237 without much trouble.

What can users do from the console? They can view job status, build jobs from separately scanned input sets, multi-shot copy several pages onto a single sheet, add cover pages, copy left and right sides of a book or magazine to separate pages, and copy two one-sided originals to a single page — ideal for licenses and medical cards. If

2005 Award Winner



10th Annual Awards

the optional network PCL6 controller kit is added, Sharp provides a great value-add. The kit's Carbon Copy Print mode lets users automatically print documents in triplicate using three different paper sources, a valuable feature in environments such as manufacturing, distribution, insurance, etc where multi-part forms have previously been a high expense item.

Adding on the optional network scanning kit brings more advanced document distribution capabilities to console users. This option enables scan-to-email, scan-to-desktop, and scan-to-FTP. With so many different destination formats, maintaining the addresses in a convenient format can be a challenge. Sharp's solution is to use a single address book displaying friendly, symbolic names — i.e., person's name, company name, directory name — and the file format to be employed (TIFF and PDF). For companies with an LDAP infrastructure, Sharp lets users directly browse the remote directory hierarchy, thus giving them access to existing destination addresses.

Sharp's Administration Utility Suite — which includes its Image Home Page and Printer Administration Utility — provides efficient management of the device from the desktop. With Image Home Page, remote users and roving administrators can access device configuration, network settings, as well as manage copier address books. Sharp's Printer Administration Utility is a basic, serviceable network monitoring tool. It automatically discovers Sharp Devices on the enterprise LAN. It lets users set alerts for consumable levels and MFP status conditions. By

clicking on individual network addresses, administrators can bring up MFP configuration information.

Also included with the network scanning option is Sharpdesk, a document management utility with many features found in more advanced enterprise-level products. Sharpdesk communicates with Sharp MFP and scanners, letting console users scan images directly to desktops on which this application is running. Once documents are stored in its library, desktop users can then apply powerful document processing and searching features from the Sharpdesk interface.

BERTL analysts have noted that Sharpdesk's search and indexing functions are both easy-to-use and efficient. For supported text document types — principally .doc, .html, .pdf, .pub. — the search function performs a keyword match on document contents. Even non-technical users can craft more complex searches by using the Sharpdesk's "boolean" operators — i.e., "and" and "or". Sharpdesk also lets users search on file attributes (file name, path, size, and modified date), and for Microsoft Office documents, on document metadata (subject, author, keyword, and title). Using all the search criteria, users can create finely-tuned queries that can quickly retrieve relevant documents. And Sharpdesk also includes a powerful document build application called Composer, which lets users access the documents stored in Sharpdesk's libraries to create customized jobs.

Last, but by no means least, having given great value with their core MFP



BERTL analyst looking over the Sharp AR-M237.

features, it's again no surprise that Sharp provides additional functionality in the security area. Sharp has been a market leader in security solutions, boasting a multi-layered approach. At a basic level, the Sharp AR-M237 supports user and departmental codes, restricting access to MFPs to authorized staff. The network scanning option also supports user authentication against an LDAP server and IP/MAC filtering. The kits supports a second layer of security by clearing out internal memory, either automatically or manually, after each operation.

The Sharp AR-M237 is offered at an aggressive entry-level price and comes with a good feature set compared to competing units. The device's Windows/host-based printing provides cost-effective printing for a small workgroup. The optional kits for network printing, network scanning, and security round off the versatile and flexible feature-set for the workgroup.

2005 Award Winner



10th Annual Awards

Spotlight On Sharp

Headquartered in Mahwah, New Jersey, Sharp Electronics Corporation (SEC) is the U.S. sales and marketing subsidiary of Japan's Sharp corporation. The company was established in the U.S. marketplace in 1962.

According to the company's mission statement, Sharp is dedicated to improving people's lives through the use of advanced technology and a commitment to innovation, quality, value, and design.

Sincerity and creativity are the company's two principal ideals. According to Sharp's mission statement, "By com-

mitting ourselves to these ideals, we can derive genuine satisfaction from our work, while making a meaningful contribution to society."

Sharp's creed emphasizes five basic ideas: Sincerity, Harmony, Politeness, Creativity, and Courage.

The company is dedicated to the use of its unique, innovative technology to contribute to the culture, benefits, and welfare of people throughout the world.

"It is the intention of our corporation to grow hand-in-hand with our employees, encouraging and aiding them to

reach their full potential and improve their standard of living," reads the Sharp mission statement. "Our future prosperity is directly linked to the prosperity of our customers, dealers and shareholders ... indeed, the entire Sharp family."

Sharp also is committed to protecting the environment and conserving energy. The corporate goal is to minimize the environmental impact of Sharp products by continually implementing and improving product technologies, designs, and programs aimed at environmental conservation.

BERTL's Best

Recognizing the Best in Digital Imaging Technology and Innovation

For the 10th consecutive year, BERTL, Inc. presents BERTL's Best: the best devices and software in the digital imaging marketplace.

BERTL's Best award winners are selected after rigorous analysis of the hundreds of digital imaging devices, software, and management utilities in the world-wide marketplace.

BERTL's analysts review current product lines and new product introductions to identify the select group of devices and software that stand apart from the others.

BERTL's Best covers the entire digital imaging and document management arena:

- Executive Office MFPs
- General Office Monochrome MFPs
- Back Office Production Devices
- Wide Format Devices
- Digital Duplicators
- General Office Color MFPs
- Back Office Production Color Devices
- Document Scanners
- Software and Utilities

Plus, BERTL's Best recognizes products for cost-efficiency and innovation.

While print or copy speeds are important, it is the feature set, functionality, performance, and overall business process value that are the key considerations in judging which product is "BERTL's Best." The important question: "How well does this product work in a real-world business setting?"

BERTL combines its wide-ranging knowledge of the competitive landscape and contact with buyers about their product and supplier experiences to identify worthy products. BERTL analyzes network management utilities, concurrency and contention, print and copy productivity, image quality, return on investment, competitive advantage, accessibility, design and build quality, standard functions, modularity of design and upgrade path, installation, and more.

BERTL is 100 percent independent. It receives no funding from the industry and all product evaluations and reports are published at BERTL's own expense for its subscribers.

BERTL publishes the world's largest library of business competitive intelligence for the digital imaging market at www.BERTL.com