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DOCUMENT IMAGING PRODUCTS 2005: BLI'S PICKS OF THE YEAR

Sharp Document Solutions Company of America

Outstanding Achievement for the "IT Friendliness" of its IMAGER Product Line

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Buyers Laboratory has honored Sharp Document Solutions Company of America with a Spring 2005 "Outstanding Achievement Award" for the "IT Friendliness" of its IMAGER multifunctional product line in the tested Windows environment. The award was given to Sharp because of its highly automated setup procedures, robust administrative utilities, extraordinarily easy-to-setup and easy-to-use scan solution and an impressive offering of standard and optional security capabilities.

BLI Manager of Lab Testing Pete Emory said that the highly automated installation procedures for the tested Windows environment, first seen last year on Sharp's 550, 620 and 700 IMAGERs, remain what he considers to be the benchmark for the industry. "While some vendors are making progress in one or more of these areas of critical importance to IT managers, none has yet to surpass Sharp," said Emory.

The print driver installation CD auto-launches upon insertion of the CD; the software auto-detects that the unit has been installed on the network and automatically creates the port for network printing; and the driver performs auto-detection of configured options upon installation, eliminating the need to manually specify configured accessories. In addition, Sharp's Printer Administration Utility allows automated distribution of print drivers. An administrator can configure the print driver and create print queues and then send an e-mail broadcast containing a link to all users who can then simply click on the link in order to install the driver on their workstations. In large installations in which many users are sharing access to a Sharp device, this capability would eliminate the need for an administrator to configure and load drivers manually on each user's workstation one at a time. And while BLI found the unit's administrative utilities to be excellent, Sharp also provides plug-ins for HP's Web Jetadmin so that network administrators who use this



popular utility for their HP printers can use it to manage all their Sharp multifunctional products as well.

Further contributing to the IT friendliness of the IMAGER products are their very well-designed print drivers, which received high marks for ease of use and allow users to check for paper availability at the point of need (i.e., before a job is sent for printing), and the excellent and very detailed feedback on device and print job status the systems provide to users' workstations, which reduces the number of user questions and problems.



**Sharp VP of Marketing Mike Marusic (left)
with BLI CEO Michael Danziger (right)**

With security concerns a big issue for IT departments today, Sharp's products can address those concerns perhaps better than any other vendor's. A demonstrated leader in security offerings for multifunctional products, Sharp was the first multifunctional product vendor to offer products with Common Criteria certification and recently became the first multifunctional product vendor to offer Common Criteria's EAL 4 level certification for one of its previously tested products (higher-level certification than currently offered by any other multifunctional product). Sharp continues to expand its offering of security features and options. In addition to offering secure print and network user authentication, which prevents unauthorized users from scanning documents by requiring them to log in before any network scanning functions are performed,

Sharp offers the data security kit, which encrypts data using 128-bit encryption and purges memory in Sharp devices by overwriting the encrypted data up to seven times. Another option that enhances overall security is AirZip's FileSECURE, which provides access rights control at the individual file level that stays with the document wherever it goes, both inside and outside of corporate networks.

In addition, Sharp's Web page enables administrators to disable protocols and close ports, and to restrict access to the device to only equipment with authorized IP and MAC addresses.

Offering an outstanding package of standard and optional capabilities that make an IT manager's job easier, Sharp's IT-friendly IMAGERs are most deserving of this "Outstanding Achievement Award."

ABOUT BLI'S PICKS OF THE YEAR

Twice a year with its "Pick of the Year" awards, BLI gives special recognition in each category to those products that provided the most outstanding performances in BLI's exhaustive lab tests.

BLI's awards stand alone in that they are based on a rigorous battery of lab tests that takes approximately two months to complete and includes an extensive durability test, during which each unit is run at the manufacturer's maximum recommended monthly volume. BLI's durability test is unique among office product evaluations and uniquely qualifies BLI to assess reliability, which is a critical factor for buyers and IT directors, given that virtually all of the products are designed for use on networks.

In addition to assessing reliability, in terms of the number of service calls and PM (preventive maintenance) calls required, as well as misfeed frequency, BLI's comprehensive evaluation includes an assessment of copy and print quality, productivity, ease of use and economy, as well as connectivity issues such as feedback to workstations, administrative utilities, print drivers, multitasking and scanning solutions. Each product that successfully passes BLI's lab test earns BLI's "Recommended" or "Highly Recommended" seal and a BLI "Certificate of Reliability" and qualifies as a "Pick" award contender. Consequently, a BLI "Pick of the Year" is a hard-earned award that buyers and IT directors can trust to better guide them in their acquisition decisions.

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