

Battlecard

Pro C9210/C9200

Versus

HP Indigo 7eco/7K



Introduction

HP introduced the Indigo 7eco and Indigo 7K in early 2020. Based on the Indigo 7900, they are SRA3+ digital sheet fed presses. The Indigo 7eco has four ink stations, with a fifth ink station available as an option. The Indigo 7K has five ink stations as standard, with a sixth and a seventh ink station available as options.

Indigo presses can be difficult to replace as they offer class-leading image quality. It is also true that customers who have invested heavily in the technology are inclined to remain loyal to the Indigo brand. There are, however, strong arguments for installing Ricoh Pro C9200 series devices as additional or alternative production systems.

Given the outstanding image quality of the Indigo devices, we suggest that salespeople accept and compliment the image quality of the Indigo presses, whilst drawing out customer pain-points. These are likely to include high hardware and service costs, poor service support, mandatory operator training, low productivity and limited media capability.







Headline specifications

			Pro C9210/C9200	Indigo 7X/7eco
Productivity	Print Speed (A4)	Colour	135ppm/115ppm	60ppm/60ppm
		Mono	135ppm/115ppm	120ppm/120ppm
	Print Speed (A3)	Colour	75ppm/62ppm	60ppm/60ppm
		Mono	75ppm/62ppm	240ppm/240ppm
Media Capability	Paper Size	Minimum	100 x 139.7mm	279.4 x 210mm (420mm duplex)
		Maximum	330.2 x 1260mm (1030mm duplex)	330 x 482mm
	Paper Thickness	Simplex	52.3-470gsm	60-650/60-350gsm
		Duplex	52.3-470gsm	60-650/60-350gsm
	Paper Capacity / Number of Trays	Standard	5,000/2	5,200/4
		Maximum	20,500/9	10,600/7
Image Quality	Print Resolution	2400 x 4800 dpi	812 x 219 dpi	
Durability	Lifetime	60 million prints	HP does not quote a machine life	
	Duty Cycle	2.6 million prints	5 million prints (2-up on A3)	

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Competitive advantages

Significant cost savings

Pro C9210/C9200		Indigo 7X/7eco	
Low initial investment			High initial investment
Low service costs			High service costs (expensive service contract and click based on blanket cylinder rotations)
Low labour costs			High labour costs (high wages plus mandatory off-site training)

Ricoh Pro C9200 series printers offer significant lifetime cost savings over Indigo 7K/7eco. The Indigo presses have high purchase prices, servicing is expensive and there are hidden costs relating to operator training. The click price is based on blanket cylinder rotations. The blanket cylinder rotates once for each colour, so four times for a CMYK print and five times for CMYK plus primer. Operators are expected to have an offset litho background. Mandatory operator training is conducted off site and wages, travel and accommodation costs must be factored in.

More productive







Pro C9210/C9200		Indigo 7X/7eco	
9 minute power up			45 minute power up
135/115 ppm A4 150/124 ppm 2-up A4 on A3 sheet			60/60 ppm A4 120/120 ppm 2-up A4 on A3 sheet
Wide variety of in-line finishing systems			Limited in-line finishing capabilities

The Indigo presses run at a speed of 60 ppm. A4 and A3 output is produced at the same speed and Indigo presses cannot print A4 duplex. Printing 2-up onto A3 paper, they can produce 120 A4 images a minute. The Ricoh devices are significantly more productive when printing A4 (135/115ppm vs 60ppm, simplex only) and 2-up A4 sheets (150/124ppm vs 120ppm).

Indigo users can compensate for the slow print speeds by using an Enhanced Productivity Mode (EPM). In EPM, the system prints CMYK files in CMY, skipping the black separation. This increases productivity to 80ppm A4 simplex or 160ppm 2-up A4.







In addition, Ricoh Pro C9200 series printers can be configured with an array of in-line finishing systems which automate production processes, increasing overall productivity. The Indigo presses are designed to feed, print and stack sheets, rather than operate as full production systems. A Bourg sheet feeder, booklet maker and preparation module are the only in-line finishing systems available for the Indigo 7K/7eco.

Less downtime

Pro C9210/C9200		Indigo 7X/7eco	
Reliable technology			Frequent maintenance
Responsive service network			Poor feedback on service support
Operator replaceable service parts			Operator replaceable service parts

Feedback from the field suggests that Indigo presses require frequent maintenance, and some customers report poor service support. Ricoh Pro C9200 series printers are supported by an EMEA-wide service network of more than nearly 5,000 certified service technicians. In addition, trained operators can quickly replace modular service parts, reducing downtime. HP also offers replaceable service parts but the Indigo presses are less easy to maintain.

Wider media versatility

Pro C9210/C9200		Indigo 7X/7eco	
Print straight onto all supported media types			Required certified (treated paper) or primer
Print photo book covers and calendars (banner sheets of up to 1260mm in length)			Maximum print size: 330 x 482mm
52.3-470gsm media support			60-350gsm Indigo 7eco / 60-650gsm Indigo 7X with thick substrate kit







The Indigo presses use liquid ink. A primer is required to improve adhesion when printing onto uncertified stock. The DFE creates an additional separation which applies primer to only those areas of the substrate where the image appears. The primer must be installed in an ink station, which means that a fifth ink station is mandatory when using uncertified media.

The Indigo presses cannot print A4 duplex. The minimum paper length for duplex printing is 420mm.

The Indigo presses cannot print banner sheets. The banner sheet capability of the Pro C9210/C9200 will interest Indigo owners as it enables production of photo book covers and calendars. Indeed, covers can be problematic for the Indigo. The maximum print length is 482mm and, because the images are relatively soft, they are prone to scratching and require lamination if they are to be used as covers.

Feedback from the field also suggests that Indigo presses struggle to print reliably onto envelopes.

Save space and reduce overheads

Pro C9210/C9200		Indigo 7X/7eco	
Compact design (footprint 2.5m ² and weight 1,076kg)			Larger spatial requirements (footprint 12.5m ² and weight 3,300kg)
Energy efficient (single phase, 9,000W/hr max)			Less energy efficient (three phase, 18,000W/hr max)
No external systems required			Requires indirect light source, external water chiller and air compressor
<p>Because the Indigo's photo imaging plate (PIP) is sensitive to light, the Indigo presses must operate under indirect light. An external water chiller is required to regulate ink and press temperatures. This must be permanently connected to a water source. The Indigo presses also require compressed air to operate.</p>			

Countering HP's claims

"Unbeatable image quality"

The image quality of the Indigo 7X/7eco is excellent, however, for most commercial applications, the image quality of the Pro C9210/C9200 is more than acceptable. The standout feature of Indigo print is its matt appearance. This results from liquid ink penetrating the paper. The print glossiness of the Pro C9210/9200 is more akin to that of offset printing, where the glossiness increases with that of the paper. It means that output from the Pro C9210/C9200 can be matched more easily to Fogra and ISO standards.

"Wide colour gamut with seven colour printing"

The additional ink stations enable the Indigo presses to realise a wide colour gamut. There is however a significant trade-off in productivity and cost. Indigo presses print colours individually and if seven colours are employed, productivity reduces by 75%. What is more, the click price is based on blanket cylinder rotations. The blanket cylinder rotates once for each colour, so four times for a CMYK print, five times for CMYK plus primer, and seven times for CMYK plus primer and two additional colours. It is also worth noting that the fifth colour station is likely to be dedicated to primer, rather than to an additional colour.

"9,600 images per hour"

HP boast 9,600 images per hour productivity for the Indigo 7X/7eco in its press releases. This is achieved in EPM mode using three colours and printing 2-up A4 onto A3 sheets. Printing full CMYK (including black) reduces productivity to 7,200 sheets per hour (2-up A4 onto A3 sheets). By contrast, the Pro C9210 can produce 9,000 full CMYK 2-up A4 images per hour. Other factors adversely affecting Indigo productivity include a 45 minute power up cycle and frequent maintenance downtime.

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