Polaroid P-500 digital photo printer
Janet Hughes
The Australian
SEPTEMBER 18, 2001

POLAROID is well known for combining innovative technology with ease of use.

$350
www.polaroid.com
Ease of use: 5/5
Value for money: 4/5

And they have excelled themselves with their new digital photo printer.

Not only does the P-500 require neither a power cord nor batteries, but Polaroid has even eliminated the need to use a computer in order to print. It couldn't be any easier to create photographic prints from a digital camera.

The P-500 digital photo printer is the perfect marriage of old and new technology - instant film and digital photography.

While digital cameras have become increasingly popular and easy to use, there has been no quick solution if a digital photographer wanted a hard copy of their digital images.

They had to be downloaded to a computer and either printed out on a home printer - with results that are generally less than satisfactory - or saved to disc and taken to a digital photography centre for output to traditional film.

Polaroid has come up with a unique solution, using their 500 instant film to create real pocket-sized photographs with almost no delay.

Even better, Polaroid made its P-500 printer small enough that it's portable. About the size of a book, weighing about 650g and with no cables, wires or cords, the digital photo printer is convenient and rugged enough to carry almost anywhere. The P-500 is also extremely easy to use. Loading the film is the most complex requirement and even that is a straightforward process - the hinged back opens with a flick of the switch on the printer's side and the film pack just slides in.

The printer is powered by the film pack and requires no additional power source, so there is nothing else to connect or plug in except a memory card from a digital camera.
The P-500 accepts the Type I and Type II CompactFlash memory cards and also ships with an adaptor for SmartMedia cards. Rather than downloading images to the printer using a cable, the user simply inserts the camera's memory card directly into the printer.

The controls on the printer are also simple. On the front of the P-500 are four buttons and a display panel. The controls allow the user to choose an image for printing with the selector button, specify additional copies if desired and then queue the print.

The photo is ejected approximately 25 seconds later and the colour image develops over the next few minutes. Image quality is very good - identical to standard Polaroid photos - and the pictures cost just over $1 per print.

Polaroid has made the process of selecting images for printing as straightforward as possible too. The P-500 supports DPOF (Digital Print Order Format) so that images that have been tagged for printing are automatically selected and queued by the printer.

Polaroid's 500 digital photo printer is portable, rugged and easy to use.

For digital camera users who can't wait to get their images onto film, the P-500 digital photo printer is an excellent solution.