

## Monochrome Cartridge Reliability Comparison Study – 2021

### *Original HP LaserJet Toner Cartridges vs. HP EvoCycle Toner Cartridges*

The *spencerLAB* DIGITAL COLOR LABORATORY has conducted a cartridge reliability comparison testing of Original HP LaserJet and HP EvoCycle branded monochrome toner cartridges.

The test included HP LaserJet CF226X (26X) and CF258X (58X)\* cartridges and HP EvoCycle 26XR and 59XR toner cartridges for the HP LASERJET PRO M402dne and M404n printers, respectively.

The analysis compared the Reliability and the overall Print Quality throughout the life of the toner cartridge models tested for each SKU. Cartridge Reliability factors, such as Dead-on-Arrival (DOA) and Low Quality (LQ) cartridges [see definitions in Appendix 4], were evaluated to determine the total number of Problem Cartridges, if any, for each SKU. Print samples from all cartridge SKUs were collected at equal intervals over the life of the cartridge, and sorted using a Print Quality Acceptance scale generated from a psychometric research study. The four PQ acceptance levels were – External Use (all uses including distribution outside the company), Internal Use (distribution inside company), Individual Use, and Unusable.

### KEY FINDINGS

- The tested HP EvoCycle toner cartridges performed comparatively equivalent to the tested Original HP cartridges in Reliability and Print Quality.
- Testing of both the Original HP toner cartridges and the HP EvoCycle cartridges yielded no Problem Cartridges.
- Original HP cartridges had a slightly larger percentage of External Use Print Quality samples at 98%; the HP EvoCycle produced 95% External Use Print Quality samples.

\*The Original HP CF258X is the North American equivalent of the European Original HP CF259X cartridge. Both NA HP 58X and EU HP 59X are compatible with the HP LJP M404 series printer.

The *spencerLAB* DIGITAL COLOR LABORATORY, a division of Spencer & Associates Publishing, Ltd., is an independent test laboratory with a broad base of industry clients. Although this independent comparative study was commissioned by HP Inc., *spencerLAB* believes these results maintain its reputation for the integrity of its procedures and analyses. Results stated herein are based upon direct testing by *spencerLAB* of actual products believed to be representative.

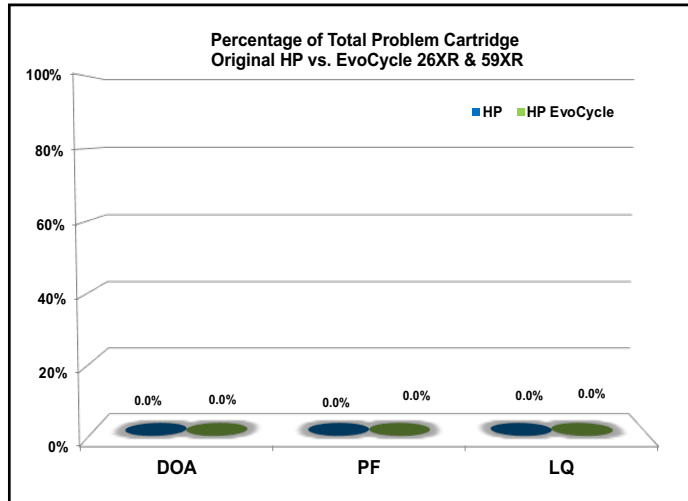
## TEST RESULTS

### CARTRIDGE RELIABILITY

Tested HP EvoCycle toner cartridges were just as reliable as Original HP cartridges. None of the tested Original HP or HP EvoCycle cartridges were deemed Problem Cartridges; there were no Dead-on-Arrivals, no Premature Failures, and no Low Quality cartridges.

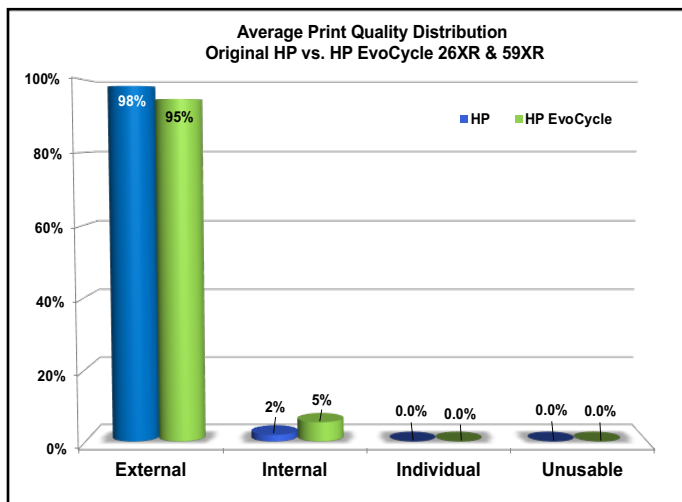
Superior cartridge reliability can decrease downtime, increase user productivity, and decrease the overall cost of printing due to lack of having to replace supplies or reprint output.

Both HP EvoCycle and Original HP cartridges performed with excellent reliability.



### PRINT QUALITY DISTRIBUTION

Original HP cartridges produced a slightly greater number of pages with higher Print Quality (PQ) than the HP EvoCycle cartridges tested. Tested Original HP cartridges produced a total of 98% of print samples categorized as good for External Use. Similarly, the HP EvoCycle cartridges produced 95% of pages that were good for External Use.



Original HP cartridges produced only 2% Internal Use pages, and no pages deemed as Unusable or Individual; HP EvoCycle produced only 5% of Internal Use pages and also no Unusable or Individual pages.

## THE *spencerLAB* DIGITAL COLOR LABORATORY

Through over thirty years of industry service, SPENCER & ASSOCIATES PUBLISHING, LTD. has earned a premier reputation for its expertise in evaluating digital color imaging and printing. Its independent test division, the *spencerLAB* DIGITAL COLOR LABORATORY, is internationally recognized as a leader in unbiased, third-party research and comparative analysis of digital imaging and printing system performance; the laboratory strictly adheres to the integrity of its methodology, even in commissioned studies. *SpencerLAB* provides leadership in quantitative and qualitative comparisons, benchmarking key performance metrics of digital printing systems in all technology classes, from desktop printers to digital color presses – providing research and evaluation services, compliance certifications, benchmark test software/hardware, and focus group management.

Leading vendors and firms for whom printing is mission-critical rely upon *spencerLAB* to provide strategic support and benchmarking of Print Quality, Ink/Toner Yield and Cost-per-Print, Throughput, Availability, Reliability and Usability for ink- and toner-based as well as other printing technologies. Corporate users rely upon *spencerLAB* for guidance in print system acquisition and usage optimization.

For more information, please visit [www.spencerlab.com](http://www.spencerlab.com).

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## APPENDIX 2: METHODOLOGY

### TEST PARAMETERS

The test included Original HP CF226X (26X) and CF258X (58X) toner cartridges and HP EvoCycle 26XR and EvoCycle 59XR cartridge SKUs tested on the HP LASERJET PRO M402 and M404 series printers, respectively. The Original HP CF258X is the North American equivalent of the European Original HP CF259X cartridge and was used in place of the latter for this test.

The Original HP 26X and 58X cartridges and associated printers were procured by *spencerLAB* for testing. The HP EvoCycle SKUs were pre-production and, therefore, provided to *spencerLAB* by HP. A total of thirty cartridges were tested.

A four-page PDF test suite was printed from a Windows 10 operating system, using Acrobat Reader DC 2000920067. Test files were printed in default mode for plain paper, using the latest printer drivers available from HP's website, on Hammermill Fore Multi-Purpose 20lb., 96 Brightness, office paper. All test printing was performed by *spencerLAB*.

Multiple separate test printers were assigned to each toner cartridge SKU in order to avoid cross-contamination of SKUs and to minimize printer-to-printer performance variation. All test supplies, such as printers, toner cartridges, and paper, were acclimated to office ambient temperature and humidity for at least 12 hours. Printing was performed in a semi-continuous manner, with stops for paper replenishment, overnight, etc., until toner cartridges reached End-of-Life (EOL). EOL is defined as degradation of Print Quality of any one page of the four-page suite to Unusable (grading scale with Unusable Print Quality benchmark established by psychometric study [see Appendix 3]). Two shake procedures were performed prior to a cartridge being deemed EOL.

### CARTRIDGE RELIABILITY TESTING

Prior to printing, all cartridges were carefully unpacked and inspected for any toner leakage and/or broken parts; any DOAs would be noted and photographed.

## PRINT QUALITY ASSESSMENT

Overall Print Quality was evaluated on a total of sixty-four print samples from each toner cartridge. The sixty-four print samples comprised of sixteen four-page suites collected at equally dispersed intervals over the life of the cartridge.

Using the psychometric Print Quality acceptance scale, *spencerLAB* evaluators independently assessed and graded the overall Print Quality of the samples by categorizing them into one of four Print Quality levels: External Use, Internal Use, Individual Use, and Unusable. The Print Quality level of each print sample was determined by the average of the evaluators' grades, with defects also noted.

As a part of evaluator training, the Print Quality evaluators graded a set of twenty print samples, three times each. Consistency of grading was measured among the evaluators, as well as among each evaluators' grades for a sample. This exercise was repeated until all evaluators had acceptable consistency in grading among each other and among their three trials per sample. During evaluation of the test print samples, the Print Quality assessment by evaluators was continuously monitored to ensure consistency. Each evaluation session lasted one hour with a thirty minute break between sessions.

The Print Quality scale samples, determined during psychometric testing, were mounted in front of evaluators' workstations for reference. Print Quality evaluation was performed in a neutral environment with uniform lighting.

## APPENDIX 3: PSYCHOMETRIC STUDY – PRINT QUALITY SCALE

A psychometric study of monochrome office printing users was conducted by *spencerLAB* in the greater New York City area (Hicksville, New York) in March of 2012, to establish a Print Quality acceptance scale. Participants who printed monochrome documents for personal, internal, and external use, were recruited from a range of professions and business sizes, from micro business (1-49 employees) to enterprise business (>500 employees). A total of thirty-eight business printing users participated in the exercise.

## TEST SUITE

*SpencerLAB* collaborated with HP to design a representative business-user test suite. *SpencerLAB* then utilized the test suite pages to simulate common Print Quality defects such as banding, streaks, dark and light density, ghosting, etc. A total of fifteen test sets were created and each test set had a range of up to twelve variations (based on severity of defect) for a single defect type.

Test sets were printed on a HP LaserJet P3015 using Windows 7 and Acrobat Reader 10.1.2. Test samples were printed in default mode for plain paper, using the latest print driver available from HP's web site at the time of printing on Hammermill Fore MP 20lb., 96 Brightness, plain office paper. All printing was performed by *spencerLAB* and test sets were reviewed to ensure that the test samples were rendered as intended.

## BUSINESS USER FOCUS GROUPS

The focus group participants judged fifteen sets of print samples and sorted the samples into four Print Quality levels based on their acceptance level of Print Quality. The test samples were rated in a neutral environment, with no external lights, and uniform lighting.

Participants sorted all the test samples into four Print Quality acceptance levels:

- External Use – acceptable for all uses, including distribution outside a company to customers, vendors, etc.
- Internal Use – acceptable for distribution inside a company, but not acceptable for distribution outside a company
- Individual Use – usable as a copy to read, file, or mark-up in the office, but not acceptable for distribution, either within or outside a company
- Unusable – not acceptable for any business purpose

*SpencerLAB* used proprietary sorting and analysis algorithms to calculate the average Print Quality rating of each sample for each test set. The resulting score was used to determine the rank order of samples in each test set.

### DARK DENSITY TEST SET SAMPLE

**Reference**

**K**

**L**

**J**

**EXTERNAL REFERENCE**

**BOUNDARY**

LOWER PQ - INTERNAL

**EXTERNAL/INTERNAL**

**BOUNDARY**

LOWER PQ - INTERNAL

**INTERNAL/INDIVIDUAL**

**BOUNDARY**

LOWER PQ - INDIVIDUAL

**INDIVIDUAL/UNUSABLE**

**BOUNDARY**

LOWER PQ - UNUSABLE

### LIGHT DENSITY TEST SET SAMPLE

**Reference**

**S**

**C**

**T**

**EXTERNAL REFERENCE**

**BOUNDARY**

LOWER PQ - INTERNAL

**EXTERNAL/INTERNAL**

**BOUNDARY**

LOWER PQ - INTERNAL

**INTERNAL/INDIVIDUAL**

**BOUNDARY**

LOWER PQ - INDIVIDUAL

**INDIVIDUAL/UNUSABLE**

**BOUNDARY**

LOWER PQ - UNUSABLE

Examples above are the boundary samples from two of the fifteen test sets.

**NOTE: IMAGES MAY NOT BE ACCURATELY REPRODUCED WHEN PRINTED FROM THIS REPORT.**



## APPENDIX 4: TEST TERMS AND DEFINITIONS

Terms		Definitions
<b>End-of-Life, (EOL)</b>		A condition determined by one of three mechanisms: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Cartridge is Dead on Arrival.</li> <li>2. Cartridge stops printing and efforts to recover are unsuccessful.</li> <li>3. Degradation of Print Quality to unacceptable (Unusable) for any one of the Test Suite pages. Any printer documentation recommendations are performed no more than two times to recover PQ. After the second recovery, if PQ does not recover or degrades to Unusable, EOL is reached and marked before pages of unacceptable quality.</li> </ol>
<b>Dead-on-Arrival, (DOA)</b>		A condition determined by one of four mechanisms: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. A cartridge that has at least 50% of the handling surface covered in leaked toner, before or during the installation process and/or toner visibly spilled in the plastic bag containing the cartridge and/or on the exterior of the cartridge.</li> <li>2. A cartridge that within the first ten pages has at least one page categorized as Individual Use or Unusable, and does not improve during the recovery process.               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Recovery process requires following the printer manual instructions for correction of the noted defect, or if the defect is not addressed in the manual, the first attempt to recover shall be to remove the cartridge and perform a shake procedure. Following this recovery process, ten more pages shall be printed and evaluated. If at least one page is categorized as Individual Use or Unusable, a second recovery attempt of printing a cleaning page, if available, shall be performed. Following the second recovery procedure, ten more pages shall be printed and pages evaluated for categorization. If at least one page is categorized as Individual Use or Unusable following this recovery process, the cartridge is DOA.</li> </ul> </li> <li>3. Cartridge is broken or missing parts.</li> <li>4. Cartridge fails to operate upon installation and does not recover upon removing the cartridge and re-installation.</li> </ol>
<b>Premature Failure, (PF)</b>		A cartridge with a page count of less than 80% of the average page count for all HP toner cartridges of that model that were not DOA, unless non-HP cartridge stated yield differs from HP stated yield.
<b>Low Quality, (LQ)</b>		A cartridge with 50% or more pages categorized as Limited Use, but was not DOA or PF.
<b>Problem Cartridges</b>		Cartridges categorized as either DOA, PF, or LQ.
<b>Limited Use</b>		Sample pages with PQ categorized as either Internal Use, Individual Use, or Unusable.
<b>Print Quality Levels</b>	<b>External Use</b>	Acceptable for all uses, including distribution outside a company to customers, vendors, suppliers, etc. Examples: marketing materials to promote the company or products, official company correspondence, invoices.
	<b>Internal Use</b>	Acceptable for distribution inside a company, but not acceptable distribution outside a company. Examples: documents to distribute to colleagues, immediate superiors or subordinates as business communication.
	<b>Individual Use</b>	Usable as a copy to read, file, or mark-up in the office, but not acceptable for distribution, either within or outside a company.
	<b>Unusable</b>	Not acceptable for any business purpose.
<b>Usable Pages</b>		Pages that were acceptable for any use, and not deemed Unusable.

*spencer***LAB**  
RELIABILITY TESTED