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HP Smart Tank Series 7602, 6001, and 5101: The Easiest-to-Use Tank Printers and Fastest-to-Set-up[1]

Objective

Keypoint Intelligence was contracted by HP Inc. to determine if the HP Smart Tank 7602, 6001, and 5101 could be considered the "easiest-to-use and fastest-to-set-up tank printers" compared to similar competitive tank printers from Canon, Brother, and Epson.

Background

Printer convenience and ease of use have become more essential than ever before for customers. They now actively seek out devices that offer seamless control through mobile apps, real-time monitoring of device status and settings online, as well as proactive alerts in case of issues. HP Smart Tank printers are designed to meet these needs by delivering an enhanced spectrum of functionality with a primary focus on convenience and elevated ease of use. This further redefines and addresses the user experience in the at-home printing domain.

Methodology & Findings

Through a combination of desk research and product testing[2], Keypoint Intelligence compared three HP printers (HP Smart Tank Series 7602, 6001, & 5101) to eight competitive models (Canon PIXMA G3290, Canon PIXMA G3270, Canon MAXIFY GX2020, Brother MFC-T980DW, Brother MFC-T580DW, Epson EcoTank ET-4950, Epson EcoTank ET-2980, Epson EcoTank ET-2800) across eight areas of smart printing technology:

- Dual-band Wi-Fi with self-healing
- Device setup
- Smart-guided lighting and buttons
- Low-on-ink sensors
- Low-on-paper sensors
- Ink refill experience
- Speed of device setup

Keypoint Intelligence's research and testing revealed that the tested HP Smart models meet the criteria set forth to be considered the "easiest-to-use and fastest-to-set-up tank printers."

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Overall Performance Ratings

	HP Smart Tank 7602	HP Smart Tank 6001	HP Smart Tank 5101*	Brother MFC-T980DW	Brother MFC-T580DW	Canon PIXMA G3290	Canon PIXMA G3270	Canon MAXIFY GX2020	Epson EcoTank ET-4950	Epson EcoTank ET-2980	Epson EcoTank ET-2800
Dual-Band Wi-Fi with Self-Healing	✓	✓	✓								
Device Setup	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Setup Speed (minutes :seconds)	15:40	16:59	17:39	45:00	45:00	24:12	20:29	24:40	40:52	42:51	36:17
Smart-Guided Lighting and Buttons	✓	✓	✓					✓			
Low-on-Ink Sensors	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Low-on-Paper Sensors	✓										
Ink Refill Experience	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

*Self-healing supported, but dual-band Wi-Fi not supported.

Check marks indicate the device supports a given feature, while green-colored checkmarks represent an advantage of that feature over the competitive machines tested. A blank field indicates a device's limitations in that criterion.

Dual-Band Wi-Fi with Self-Healing

Of the devices in this study, the HP Smart Tank 7602 and HP Smart Tank 6001 are the only devices here that have dual-band Wi-Fi with self-healing listed as a product feature. By utilizing both 2.4 GHz and 5.0 GHz frequency bands, HP's devices have access to 12 non-overlapping channels as opposed to the 3 channels that users could find on devices with only 2.4 GHz. This means that HP's Smart Tank printers can automatically overcome local print network failures that would otherwise hinder users' print activities, ensuring a reliable and uninterrupted printing experience. As for the HP Smart Tank 5101, the device supports self-healing, but does not support dual-band Wi-Fi and, as such, wireless operations are only compatible on the 2.4 GHz band.

Based on publicly available information, two of the tested devices from HP's competing vendors have dual-band Wi-Fi, indicating that they can connect to both 2.4 GHz and 5GHz Wi-Fi networks. These devices are the Epson EcoTank ET-4950 and Canon MAXIFY GX2020W. However, based on reviews of manufacturer brochures and webpages for the products in the study, there are no indications that any of the competing products can overcome local network failures (for example, mentions of "self-healing," "failover," and/or "fail safe"), which suggests that self-healing Wi-Fi technology is not built into these devices.

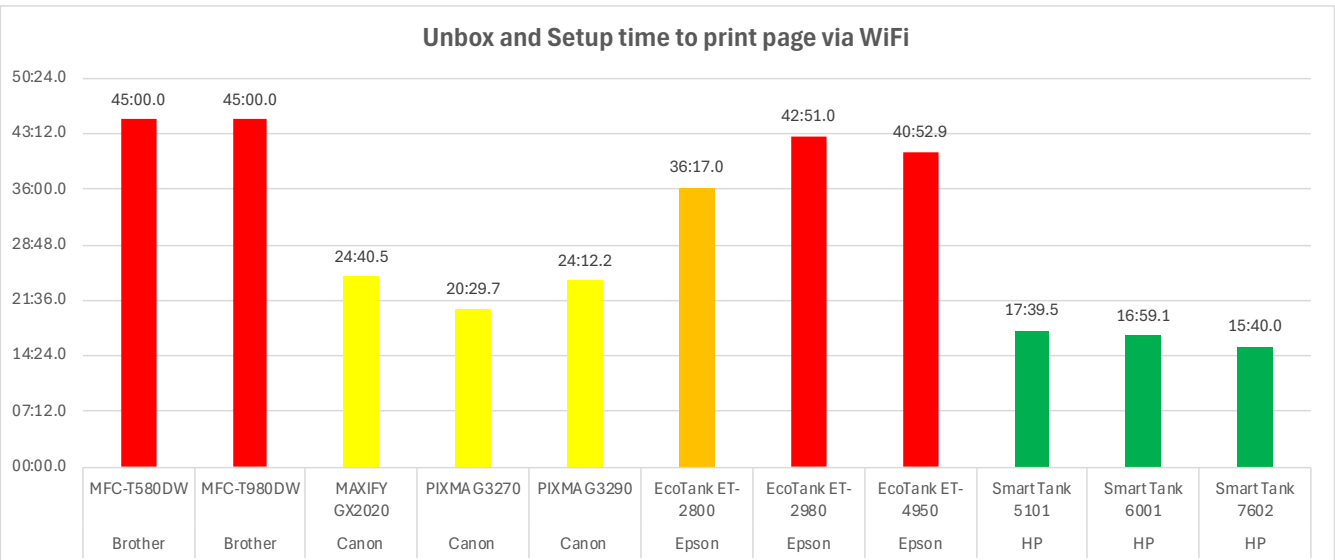
Device Setup

The HP devices were the easiest to set up among all the printers evaluated in this study. While the experiences of unboxing the various devices, powering them on, and having them initialize were very similar across all tested models, the process of adding these devices to the Wi-Fi network was significantly easier for the HPs. Indeed, this was driven by the HP software/driver, which is available for Android and Apple mobile devices as well as Windows and macOS computers. Once the printer is automatically detected through Bluetooth and then selected, Wi-Fi and Wi-Fi Direct are installed seamlessly for immediate printing. The HP software/driver also provides users with step-by-step instructions for loading paper, installing ink, and performing other tasks using detailed animations and translated instructions—an improvement over printed instructions that are static in nature.

The Canon and Epson models require more steps for setup with the Canon setup process requiring the rather old-fashioned step of pressing a dedicated Wi-Fi button. The Brother setup process has more steps than the HP setup process and, although the devices recognized the available Wi-Fi, a connection could not be made with the default or alternative method. A successful connection to Wi-Fi was made with the last option available via USB, making for a time-consuming set-up. When it comes to setting up Wi-Fi from a computer, the HP software/driver experience for Windows and macOS users is notably more automated and seamless compared to the experience of installing a CD or downloading drivers required by the competitors. The HP software/driver can also be used to register the printer, which provides access to other printer features, through creating an HP account or signing into an already existing one. In addition, instructions are provided for how to use the printer from other mobile devices or computers.

Speed of Device Setup

Speed of device setup was evaluated by measuring the total time required to go from unboxing the printer to successfully printing a page over Wi-Fi. This end-to-end process reflects the real-world experience a typical user would encounter when setting up a new device for the first time. Overall, setup times varied widely across manufacturers and models, with competitors taking an average of 52% longer to set up than HP. HP Smart Tank devices demonstrated the fastest setup experience, with all three models completing setup in under 18 minutes, making them the easiest and quickest to utilize. Canon models delivered moderate setup performance, consistently falling between 20 and 30 minutes. Epson EcoTank models generally required longer setup times, with one model exceeding 35 minutes and two models taking more than 40 minutes to complete setup. Brother models incurred the longest setup times overall, with both tested devices exceeding 45 minutes as a result of difficulties connecting to Wi-Fi automatically and requiring a more time-consuming setup process compared to other printers. In summary, users prioritizing a fast and straightforward setup experience will find HP Smart Tank models to be the most efficient as HP is on average 18 minutes and 9 seconds or 108% faster to set up than competitors.



	Under 20 minutes
	Between 20:01 to 30 minutes
	Between 30:01 to 40 minutes
	Over 40 minutes or could not connect to Wi-Fi automatically = 45 minutes

Easy-to-use Software

The HP software provides remote feedback to users, as users can look at consumables levels right from their home screen, stay informed about the latest firmware updates to ensure their devices are operating at peak performance, track paper levels to help avoid unexpected printing interruptions, receive offline status alerts if a printer experiences network connectivity issues, and alerts for when the printer door is open.

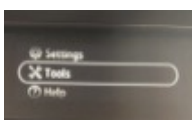
Other advantages of the HP software include:

- A simple automated process for setup that involves fewer steps compared to competing devices (for example, the Canon printers required a connection to Wi-Fi before they could establish a connection with the software)
- A wide range of photo editing features, including filters, crop, and brightness adjustment
- A virtual agent to guide users through solving common problems and issues
- A consistent performance and interface with its PC, iOS, and Android editions

User Interface including Smart-Guided Lighting and Buttons

The HP Smart Tank 7602 provides the most intuitive walk-up user interface of all the printers evaluated, with usability enhanced by the Magic Touch Panel touchscreen, smart-guided lighting, and smart-guided buttons. The 3" x 1" LED touchscreen is a good size for legibility and for a variety of hand sizes, and the white text against the black background makes text easier to read. While neither the Smart Tank 6001 and 5101 boast the 7602's Magic Touch Panel, both models still incorporate the same smart-guided lighting and buttons as the 7602, features which contribute greatly to the overall ease of user experience.

Interface Comparisons

HP Smart Tank 7602	HP Smart Tank 5101	Brother MFC-T980DW	Brother MFC-T580DW	Canon PIXMA GX2020	Epson EcoTank ET-2800	Epson EcoTank ET-4950
						
3" x 1" LED "Magic Touch" touchscreen	1.2" iCON LCD Display	1.8" x 1.25" full-color LCD		Full dot matrix display	2.4" color display	2.4" color touchscreen

Navigation of the HP Smart Tank 7602 touchscreen is also simple, with users able to interact and access various settings and information—including consumables levels—and perform printer functions through the standard or shortcut selections. This contrasts with the Brother MFC-T980DW, for example, which is not as easy unless one is familiar with Brother products. In addition, this is the only device tested with a screen angled upward, making it easier for people (those with limited abilities inclusive) to interact with a device that is lower than them.

Another advantage of the HP Smart Tank 7602's walk-up experience is the smart lighting that complements onscreen alerts. With this feature, depending on the printer's status, lighting may appear in a particular color above the paper output tray. For example, amber signals the printer needs attention/an error might have occurred while green indicates the printer is busy, doing an update, or turning on or off.

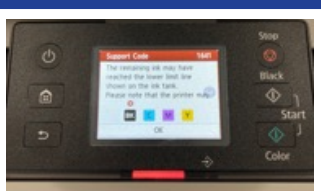
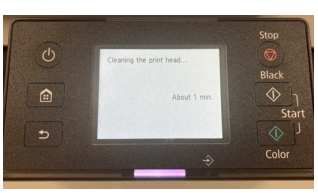
Different Colored Smart Lighting Above HP Smart Tank 7602 Paper Output Tray

Color Name	Color Name	Alert Description
	Amber	Indicates the printer requires attention, such as an error condition.
	Blue	Shows the Wi-Fi network connection status.
	Light blue	The printer is idle or in sleep mode while connected to a Wi-Fi network.
	Green	The printer is busy, doing an update, or turning on or off.
	Purple	The printer is in Wi-Fi setup mode.
	White	The printer is idle, sleeping, or processing a job.

In addition, certain colors can be shown in different ways and in different combinations to provide more information. For example, if an amber light is quickly blinking, that means a critical error has occurred and the printer must be turned off and back on. If a flashing amber light is preceded by a pulsing solid blue light, that means the printer is unable to connect to a Wi-Fi network. If a flashing amber light is preceded by a rapidly blinking solid purple light, this indicates a Wi-Fi Protected Setup (WPS) error.

Although the Canon MAXIFY GX2020 had some different colored lighting which changes from white when the device is powered on, it is limited when compared with the HP devices, indicating error state or printhead cleaning/alignment.

Smart Lighting For Canon MAXIFY GX2020

Color of Light	Color Name	Alert Description
	Red	Indicates the printer requires attention, such as an error condition.
	Purple	Observed for printhead alignment/cleaning.
	White	The printer is idle, sleeping, or processing a job.

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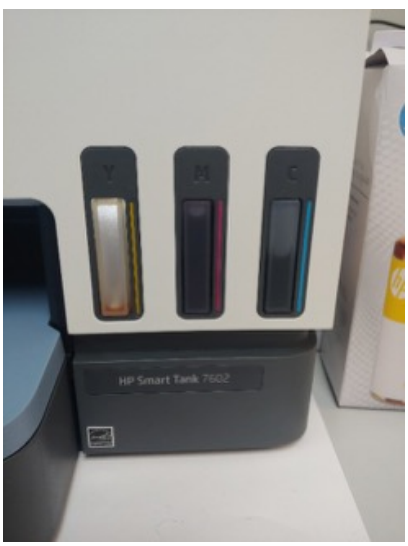
Another form of lighting only found on the HP Smart Tank 7602 is ink tanks that illuminate when ink levels are low or empty. While there are multiple ways users can be alerted to low ink levels, this is perhaps the most straightforward way this can be communicated to users.

HP Smart Tank 7602 Ink Tank Illuminations

Black cartridge level is fine.	Yellow cartridge lit up due to low ink level.	Blue cartridge lit up due to no ink remaining.
		

Despite not having this kind of lighting, the other devices do have windows enabling users to view ink levels. That said, Brother's ink windows are behind a cover and somewhat hard to see.

Brother MFC-T980DW Ink Levels

Another strength of the HP Smart Tank 7602 is its printer status messages on the touchscreen, along with the ability to cancel a job by pushing a red X.

HP Smart Tank 7602 Status Messages

Low-on-Ink and Low on Paper Sensors

HP Smart Tank 7602 features the most comprehensive system for detecting and alerting users to low ink and low on paper against the competitive models tested. For ink, the 7602's touchscreen will populate several different alert messages depending on how much of the tanks have been depleted. Alerts will read from, "Fill tanks: the indicated tanks do not have enough ink" upon realizing low ink levels to "Tanks very low: The indicated tanks are very low" if the tanks are significantly depleted. Plus, as mentioned above, users can not only see the tanks and their contents easily, but the tanks light up when ink is running low, signaling they should add ink (which is required for continued operation). The 7602's panel also provides detailed animations of how to fill the depleted ink tanks once the user is prompted to do so, helping to guide them through the process. As for loading paper, once the tray of the 7602 is low on paper, an orange indicator light beneath the HP logo will illuminate to alert the user to load the tray.

Low ink and low on paper alerts are displayed right on the touchscreen, thanks to the sensors for both consumable types. While low ink alerts are also shown on the other products evaluated for this study, that is not the case for low on paper alerts where, at most, they indicate that there is no paper in the tray.

Ink and Paper Alerts on HP Smart Tank 7602's "Smart Guided" Menu Screen

Tank low on ink message.	Tray low on paper message.	Ink tank levels accessible via touchscreen menu.
		

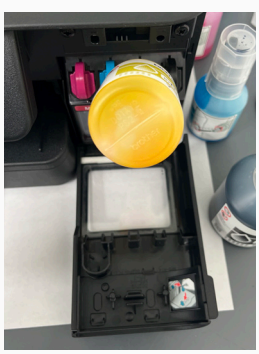
HP software/driver also notifies users that low on ink for the HP Smart Tank 7602. Low on paper status as well as five distinct paper level status indicators provide enhanced reporting. This is an advantage over the mobile and desktop notifications for the other products evaluated, as these only highlight low ink. Furthermore, the Brother MFC-T980DW, Brother MFC-T580DW, Epson EcoTank ET-2800, Canon PIXMA G3290, and Canon PIXMA G3270 will continue printing when ink levels are low, potentially causing damage to the print head in the process.

Ink Refill Experience

The process of refilling each of the tested HP Smart Tank models' ink tanks was both clean and spill-free, with less potential for mess to occur compared to the experience of refilling a few of the competing products' ink tanks. No spills or mess occurred when opening the HP ink bottles and filling up the tanks, thanks in large part to a seal at the top of the bottles that prevents leakage.

For the competitors, though, this process wasn't so foolproof. The ink bottles for the Brother devices have an improved key design for the nozzle but must be positioned at a 45° angle during the refill process. With a full bottle, the ink could easily spill if the user does not tilt the nozzle of the bottle quickly enough into the tank. Similarly, if the bottles for the Canon devices weren't turned upside down quickly enough, droplets of ink could start to spill. And while the Epson bottles offer the benefit of a specific key notch system that prevents users from pouring a given ink color into the wrong tank, the tanks do not appear to be large enough to hold their contents. The Epson ink bottles are not a one-for-one refill, meaning a single bottle of ink is not depleted fully when refilling the tank; a healthy amount of ink is left in each bottle after a tank is fully refilled, which could prove problematic if a user is unaware that the bottle is not empty and disposes of the bottles prematurely. Moreover, about 10% of the bottle remained at the tip of the Epson bottles and could easily drip out. Refilling ink in the Epson models also took longer than the competing devices due to the "initializing" process, which according to the device display, could take an estimated 10 minutes to complete. The process is designed to properly prime and distribute ink throughout the printer's internal ink delivery system, including the tubes and print head.

Refilling HP Ink Tanks vs. Other Models

HP Smart Tank 7602	Brother MFC-T580DW	Canon PIXMA GX2020	Epson EcoTank ET-2800/ ET-2980/ET-4950
			
			

Ink Spills Resulting from Filling Brother Device

When holding ink bottles upside down above a sheet of paper, no spillage occurred. One ink spill occurred when filling the Brother MFC-T580DW tank device.

Brother MFC-T580DW


List of End Notes

[1]Compared to the majority of in-class 3:1 and 4:1 duplex, wireless A4 ink tank printers under $500 USD. Printers selected by market share as reported by IDC Quarterly Hardcopy Peripherals Tracker–Final Historical CYQ3 2025. Claim based on publicly available information as of March 2026 and Keypoint Intelligence hands-on testing and study commissioned by HP in March 2026. For details: keypointintelligence.com/HPEasiesttoUseTank

[2]Testing was conducted in Keypoint Intelligence's US lab under ambient conditions of 72°F (+/-5°F) and 45% RH (+/-10%), monitored daily by an Extech digital temperature/humidity recorder. Test materials/equipment included US-sourced supplies and Keypoint Intelligence's dedicated test network consisting of Windows 2012, 2016, and 2019 servers and Windows 11 Professional workstations, 10/100/1000BaseTx network switches, and CAT5e/6 cabling.

About Keypoint Intelligence

For over 60 years, clients in the digital imaging industry have relied on Keypoint Intelligence for independent hands-on testing, lab data, and extensive market research to drive their product and sales success. Keypoint Intelligence has been recognized as the industry's most trusted resource for unbiased information, analysis, and awards due to decades of analyst experience. Customers have harnessed this mission-critical knowledge for strategic decision-making, daily sales enablement, and operational excellence to improve business goals and increase bottom lines. With a central focus on clients, Keypoint Intelligence continues to evolve as the industry changes by expanding offerings and updating methods, while intimately understanding and serving manufacturers', channels', and their customers' transformation in the digital printing and imaging sector.

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