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First Look: NEC's Slick Wi-Fi Projector

NEC's LT265 can connect to an 802.11g wireless network, but getting it set up can be tricky.

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NEC's LT265 wireless-ready digital DLP projector has a smooth, egg-shell-white veneer that immediately makes it an attention-getter. I found much to like about this unit, but also a few drawbacks--including an overly complex wireless setup.

With the \$2495 projector's native XGA (1024 by 768) resolution, text and graphics were crystal clear and sharp. Also impressive was the projector's long list of features: a brightness rating of 2500 lumens; software that lets you control your PC remotely via the projector (or broadcast images from one laptop to multiple projectors); and a USB port that recognizes flash memory drives.

Less impressive was my shipping unit's color handling: On test images and a test video DVD, colors appeared muted, lacking punch and vibrancy. Adjusting the image presets to graphics or movie mode helped but didn't optimize the view. The unit comes with an unusually large number of sophisticated image fine-tuning options in its menus; but while I appreciated the options (including the ability to project images onto a color background), the menu design made the adjustment process tedious.

Setup Setbacks

Basic setup for the LT265 was simple, thanks to a host of connectivity options; these include two computer inputs, RGB video and S-Video inputs, and wired ethernet. Unfortunately, the wireless setup was far less straightforward.

To go wireless, I installed NEC's optional \$159 NWL-100A PC Card (the company says that other G-based PC cards may work with the unit, but it won't provide tech support for third-party cards). Unfortunately, neither the included manual nor the on-screen help provided adequate guidance; both lacked clues for configuring my PC's network settings to work with the projector (NEC says that it plans to post additional help on its Web site).

Once I figured out the network settings on the projector and on my PC (including installing the bundled utility required for wireless transmissions), the projector worked well. Motion video (such as a DVD movie or a video clip from my hard drive)

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played a bit sluggishly, but the split-second delay didn't disrupt my slideshow projections.

Wireless Wrangling

Once configured, the wireless component proved to be a significant improvement over earlier iterations of Wi-Fi projection I've seen. Nevertheless, the LT265 supports 802.11g only when a laptop that's using 802.11g communicates with the projector via a g network access point, such as a router. Direct PC-to-projector connections max out at 802.11b speeds and are even more complicated to achieve.

In other words, if you're planning to take this 6.4-pound projector on the road (which is feasible given its convenient handle, and included carry case), you'll need to tote a Wi-Fi router to get the best performance out of it.

The NEC LT265's vast array of features make this model a good, versatile choice for a range of presenting situations--including use in small to medium-size conference rooms, and at events involving more than one presenter at a given location. The unit's less-than-stunning color reproduction at default settings and its overly complicated wireless setup temper my recommendation, however.

NEC LT265



Great features and good image quality only partially offset this projector's poor documentation, and potentially complex wireless setup.