

## Toshiba TDP-SW20

Wireless For Less. Toshiba's TDP-SW20 severs the video cable without breaking the bank.



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With a wireless projector, not only will you be able to leave that cumbersome computer video cable at home, you can also easily switch from one presenter to another during a meeting. The only downside of wireless projectors has been their high prices. Until now.

On the outside, the \$1,199 list price Toshiba TDP-SW20 is a medium-sized projector housed in a no-nonsense, rectangular, silver-gray casing. With a weight of 6.8 pounds, the SW20 is one of the heavier budget projectors on the market, though it is still lighter and smaller than the budget-priced Epson S1+. Like all low-cost models, the SW20 has a native resolution of only 800 x 600 (SVGA), but its brightness of 1,400 ANSI lumens and contrast ratio of 2,000:1 are among the highest in its class.

The most interesting feature of the SW20 is its PC Card slot on the back panel, which is designed to accept an 802.11b card. With this card, laptop users can send their presentations to the projector without the need for the traditional VGA cable. When you insert the included Wi-Fi card, however, its antenna nub juts out a bit from the projector, so there is a danger of it accidentally snapping off.

The SW20 uses DLP imaging technology, a big improvement over Toshiba's previous budget projectors. DLP relies on an array of fast-moving microscopic mirrors to form images. The result of using such technology is smaller projectors with higher-contrast images.

Although many aspects of the SW20 bespeak a budget-priced system, its back panel offers a surprisingly broad array of connection options. In addition to the standard computer and video connections, there are three stereo audio inputs (one each for the computer, composite video, and S-video input channels) and two computer video inputs. There is also a computer monitor and audio-out connectors.

The wireless capability was better than we expected for a budget projector. We could connect to the projector fairly easily using the wireless-LAN-switching capability in Windows XP. Once connected, we ran the wireless utility that comes on a CD bundled with the projector. With this utility, we could choose the desired projector, and then have our laptops screen image automatically projected. The only downside was that the image quality was of lower quality than what we got using a cable, but still more than sufficient for slideshow use.

The traditional weak point of wireless projecting has been its transmission speed, which is only a fraction of that provided by cable. The SW20 was quite fast, however, exhibiting what is probably the fastest slide transitions we have seen in a wireless projector using 802.11b. We were also surprised to see how well some of the animation schemes in PowerPoint worked.

When using the cable, the SW20 serves up some of the cleanest and highest-contrast images around, an impression that was partially confirmed by our lab tests. In fact, the SW20 is the brightest budget projector yet, exceeding its claimed brightness by a small amount. The contrast ratio, however, was about average for a DLP-based budget model. Also, TDP-SW20's brightness was not very uniform, yielding one of the lowest uniformity scores we have seen. Finally, the total time required for warming up and cooling down the projector is a leisurely 4 minutes. Be sure to have some anecdotes ready while your audience waits.

As with any budget projector, you should expect some compromises, and the SW20 makes several. The included carrying case has no padding; its barely more protective than a burlap sack. Other than the AC and computer video cables, no other cables are included. The remote control is rather large and does not support any type of mouse emulation, meaning it cannot help you page through a PowerPoint presentation.

Toshiba has cut a few corners to introduce wireless presenting to the masses, but the company has also cut the price. If you want a good, affordable projector that also happens to support wireless connections, the Toshiba TDP-SW20 wont let you or your audience down.