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# Hewlett Packard forays into retail photo printing

Our Bureau  
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MULTINATIONAL computer firm Hewlett Packard better known for its printers, servers and boxes for the enterprise, is now wooing the Indian consumer by entering the retail photo printing market. The HP logo, more commonly seen on a laptop or a desktop, will now be visible outside photo developing and printing outlets. The firm is tying up with channel partners and existing players for HP branded outlets to tap the market that's estimated at around 3 billion prints per year in India.

Snapfish, the company HP acquired in 2005, will also be launching in India. Snapfish provides free online space to store digital photographs and allows partnerships through which the photographs can be printed. Photography using films is increasingly becoming obsolete and as more pictures are taken through digital cameras and camera phones, very few of them get printed. Most of them are stored online or on other digital media such as CDs and pen drives.

HP is targeting the potentially huge retail market for digital photo prints and India, with its large population, can grow into one of its most lucrative markets, along with countries like China. In about four years, HP is conservatively aiming at 3,000 photo outlets, according to HP India sales general manager - consumer

sales, imaging & printing group Varadarajan Krishnan.

"Digital prints are growing by 26% and the market for film prints is falling by 17%," HP Asia Pacific & Japan retail photo solutions, imaging & printing group director V Narayanan said. HP's retail presence in the country will be through self-operated kiosks that print digital photographs and accept credit card payments, a full-fledged photo centre providing for prints on canvas, mugs, T-shirts and other media and HP Micro Labs, a scaled down version of the photo centre.

"We expect the HP Micro Lab to be big in emerging markets like India and China," Mr Narayanan said. The launch in India will be multi-city and HP has already kick-started discussions with

**PHOTO FINISH**

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channel partners. The photo centres are likely to be situated in hypermarkets and malls and the kiosks in high traffic areas, that could again be in locations such as malls.

The photos will be printed using HP inkjet and laser printers and have a shelf life of over 100 years if kept exposed and over 200 years if they are kept protected in an album or in a glass-protected photoframe, HP officials said. HP's rivals in the photo printing market, Kodak and Fuji, use dye or silver-halide printing.

For Snapfish founder Bala Parthasarathy, the India launch is a homecoming of sorts. An Indian by birth, he founded Snapfish in 2000 in US.