

Scanners - Flatbed Scanner

Scanners come in many models, sizes, and price ranges, and serve a variety of purposes. Two main types of scanners are the flatbed and the sheet feeders or paper-driven scanners. This latter type is used most often for text scanning. The flatbed scanner is the type recommended most often for scanning pictures, photographs or children's artwork. Within a matter of minutes you can save a family photograph as a picture file on your computer. This picture can then be inserted into a word processing program to be printed along with written text. Scanned photos and artwork can also be placed in an authoring program, such as *HyperStudio*, so that preschool children can create their own personalized computer screens. Most flatbed scanners on the market today will perform suitably for these purposes. However there are a variety of models available with new ones being developed constantly. In order to purchase the right scanner to suit your needs, several features must be considered. These features include:

Color Options - monochrome or black and white is acceptable for text pages, but a color scanner is needed for color images, such as color photos and artwork.

Resolution - DPI or PPI (the number of dots or pixels per inch) the higher the number the better the resolution. Most scanners scan at 300-1200 DPI which provides a range of image quality.

Bit Depth - this also determines the quality of the scanned image. The higher the bit depth, the more color information per pixel can be captured by the scanner. Most scanners offer 24-bit depth.

Maximum Scan Area - most scanners let you scan images as large as 8.3 x 11 inches or 8.5 x 14 inches.

Besides these features, software is another consideration. To scan pictures you will need software which provides graphics options. To scan text, OCR (optical character recognition) software is needed. Both of these types of software may be included with your scanner. Or you may be required to purchase a graphics program, such as *Adobe Photoshop*, or OCR software, such as *OmniPage* or *TextBridge*, for scanning text. The cost of flatbed scanners varies depending on available features.