

HOW TO SCAN IMAGES

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Every scanner has different scanning instructions. However, the scanning process in general is similar.

In this article, you will find all the information you need on how to scan images for different purposes. The useful scanning tips will help you get the maximum performance out of your scanner.

File Format

When scanning an image, the intended use of the image is important. Are you planning on printing it, sending it as an email or using it on the web? Knowing what you want to do with the scanned image will help you choose the right format for your image. The most common file formats for images are tif, gif, jpg, bmp and psd (Photoshop).

Scanning for Print

If you are going to print out your scanned image, save it as a tif or bmp. The quality of gifs and jpgs in printed documents is inferior to tifs and bmps.

Scanning for Web

If you are going to use your scanned image on the web, save it as a gif or jpg file. If it is a simple graphic image, save it as a gif file. If it is a photograph, save it as a jpg file.

Multi-Purpose Scanning

If you are going to both print your scanned image and use it on the web, then save it in a high quality format (psd, tif, or bmp). If needed, you can always open this file later and save it as a web image.

File Format Chart

File Type	Extension	Use
TIFF	tif	High-resolution image to be printed
GIF	gif	Low-resolution web image, line art, or solid color
JPEG	jpg	Low-resolution web image or photograph
Photoshop	psd	High-resolution image to be edited in Photoshop
Bitmap	bmp	High-resolution image to be printed

File Size & Image Resolution

Knowing what you would like to do with the scanned image will help you choose the right file size. If you are going to use your image on the web, a medium to medium-low quality image will be quite sufficient. A small image will also load faster on the web page. So you may prefer using lower sizes as the viewers of the image may get impatient waiting for a larger image to load.

For printed images, the file size may need to be higher depending on what type of a document you will use it in. The higher the file size the better the image quality. A higher-size file has a higher resolution. Resolution is the number of pixels (or dots) per inch of image (dpi). The larger the number, the more pixels per inch and the higher the quality of the image.

Scanning Instructions

1. Carefully clean the scanner glass with a piece of cloth or glass cleaner and allow it to dry.
2. Make sure the scanner is on.
3. Place the item on the scanner glass with the image facing down. Ensure that the actual print area is parallel to the edges of the scanner.
5. After you start the scanner software, run a preview. If your scanner software does not run the preview automatically, do so yourself.
6. If your picture or graphic appears skewed or crooked in the preview, line it up better and repeat the preview.
7. On the preview, use your mouse to outline the desired scan area.
8. If you are going to use Photoshop (or any other image editing program), scan all color images as 'millions of colors'. Otherwise, use grey scale for black and white.
9. Adjust the scanner resolution. Set it to 300 dpi to scan for printing and 72 dpi for scanning for use on the web.
10. Try the auto-exposure button if applicable in your software to adjust brightness and contrast, if needed.
11. Click Scan or Final to scan the image.
12. Save image in tif, psd or bmp if you are scanning to print. Save it in jpg or gif if you are scanning for the web.

Scanning Software

With all scanner software, the scanning features and scanning process are generally similar. However, here are a few scanning software programs that we recommend.

If you want to scan from your transparencies and produce good quality 24bit images somewhat automatically, then **Silverfast AI** could be a good choice for you. If you want to scan negatives, then you may find **Vuescan** pretty useful. Any program needs to be compatible with your scanner.

Other Recommended Scanner Software:

HP PrecisionScan
Microtek ScanWizard 5
Microtek ScanWizard Pro 6
Minolta Scan Dual II
Umax VistaScan
Umax MagicScan

PrintCountry.com offers a list of popular Free Digital Photo Software downloads. Visit http://www.printcountry.com/free_software.asp for more info.

Scanning Tips

- Choose the best possible photo. Although you can make adjustments on your image with the image editing programs, the better your original image, the better your final scan will be. For better results, choose pictures with good contrast and that also have good lighting.
- Always scan your image in the position or direction in which the image will be used. If you rotate the image in your image editing program, some detail will be lost.
- Scan only the part of the image that you need. If you don't need the whole image but only a small portion of it, then just scan that portion. Your scanner software has the tools to do this.
- To make adjustments to color and sharpness on your scanned image, use your image editor, not the software of your scanner.
- When saving a jpg, a quality of 2, 3 or 4 is generally sufficient for scanning for the web.
- When you are editing, don't forget that the image's appearance will change from monitor to monitor. Also, the height and width of the image will vary from software to software.
- Read the manual for your scanner software if available and get to know your scanner software. Or, just play with the software until you are sufficiently familiar with it. As you make more and more scans, you will better understand how to get the best results from your scanner.

Before purchasing your printer, visit <http://www.printcountry.com/> to check out the prices of the available ink cartridges your target printer uses. Visit our [Photo Paper Section](#) as well. You can also download our [Printer Buying Guide](#).

Scanning Glossary

Here is a list of terms that may be beneficial to you if you are unfamiliar with the terminology used in scanning, image editing and printing.

Bmp (Bitmap) - An image represented as pixels in a row and column format.

Brightness - Lightening or darkening a picture when it's too dark or light.

CMYK - The abbreviation for cyan, magenta, yellow, and black.

Cropping - Cutting out a portion of the original picture to eliminate distracting elements or improve composition.

Color balance - Changing the overall color tint of an image when it's too red, too green, or too yellow.

Contact Image Sensor (CIS) - Used in smaller, low-cost scanners - a new type of image sensor that has limitations on resolution.

Contrast - Increasing or decreasing the difference in darkness between one tone and another.

Density - The lightness or darkness of an image or a portion of an image.

Dpi (Dots per inch) - Abbreviation for dots per inch. It is a measurement of print resolution that indicates the maximum number of dots that the printer can print in a square inch.

Grayscale - Gray values in an image.

Highlight - The brightest values in an image.

Jpg (Joint Photographic Experts Group) - A standardized format used by many digital cameras for storing images. This format is commonly used for emailing and posting images on the web.

Monochrome - Having a single color. Typically refers to a black and white image, but could also be any single color image.

Optical Character Recognition (OCR) - The process of converting printed characters into the ASCII characters and other attributes of a bitmapped image of text.

Pixel (Picture Element) - Each single dot in a digital photograph is called a pixel.

Preview Scan - A preliminary scan that can be used to define the exact area for the final scan. A low-resolution image of the full page or scanning area as shown, and a frame of some type are used to specify the area to be included in the final scan.

Resolution - The number of pixels in a digital photograph.

Saturation - The strength or purity of a color.

Scanner - A device that captures images or text and converts it to a bitmapped image.

Shade - A color with black added.

Sharpness - Creating the appearance of sharper focus.

Thumbnail - A miniature copy of a page or image, which gives you an idea of what the original looks like without having to open the original file or view the full size image.

TIFF (Tagged Image File Format) - A graphic file format originally developed specifically for scanners. It can be used to store grayscale and color images and has become the graphic standard image file format supported by most applications, printers, and scanners.

USB - An input/output cable capable of transferring data at 12 megabits and is used for connecting peripherals to a computer. It can connect up to 127 peripherals through a single port.

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