Color Flatbed Scanners

The color scanners that met the requirements for the PC/Computing 200 are flatbed models that scan reflective media such as photographs (though several models also scan transparencies). All read in 24 bits per pixel--that is, 16,777,216 colors--as well as grayscales and monochrome images. The scanning window had to accommodate letter-size stationary as a minimum requirement.

Product

Umax 1200
Umax Technologies
3170 Coronado Dr.
Santa Clara, CA 95054
(800) 562-0311
(408) 982-0771
Price: $5,995

Umax 630
Umax Technologies
3170 Coronado Dr.
Santa Clara, CA 95054
(800) 562-0311
(408) 982-0771
Price: $1,995

HP ScanJet IIc
Hewlett-Packard Co.
19310 Pruneridge Ave.
Cupertino, CA 95014
(800) 752-0900
Price: $2,195

ScanMaker 600Z
Microtek Lab
680 Knox St.
Torrance, CA 90502
(800) 654-4160
(213) 321-2121
Price: $1,995

Sharp JX600
Sharp Electronics Corp.
Sharp Plaza
Mahwah, NJ 07430
(800) 237-4277
(201) 529-8200

Price: $13,500

Sharp JX-320
Sharp Electronics Corp.
Sharp Plaza
Mahwah, NJ 07430
(800) 237-4277
(201) 529-8200
Price: $2,195

Scanmaster 3 Plus
Howtek
21 Park Ave.
Hudson, NH 03051
(603) 882-5200
Price: $9,195

Mustek MFS-3000C
Mustek
15225 Alton Pkwy.
Irvine, CA 92718
(800) 366-4620
(714) 833-7740
Price: $1,295

Epson ES-300C
Epson America
20770 Madrona Ave.
Torrance, CA 90503
(800) 922-8911
(310) 782-0770
Price: $1,399

Scan 300/Color
Abaton
48431 Milmont Dr.
Fremont, CA 94538
(800) 628-3837
(510) 498-1111
Price: $1,995

Evaluation	Score

This one-pass machine ranks highest because of a strong all-around showing. The Umax 1200 produces sharp images with a wide range of color. PhotoStyler provided all the image-editing tools and output controls necessary for selecting and editing the minute details that matter in a high-resolution image. Strong warranty, phone support, and good documentation were the icing on the cake. With optional transparency scanning, the 1200's only hardware shortcoming is the lack of an 11-by-17-inch scanning window.

87.60

A close second to its one-pass sibling, the three-pass Umax 630 tops the chart for the same reasons as the 1200: It provides a professional-quality image and supports it with a strong all-around showing. At less than half the price of the 1200, the Umax 630 has a few drawbacks: It has little contrast and a lot of convergence in the final image.

86.20

The HP ScanJet IIc scans fastest, leaving the others trailing by 20K per second. Its affordable price, easy installation, and legal-size window make this one of our favorite machines. The image-editing software, Publisher's Paintbrush, lacks the high-end controls of PhotoStyler and Image-In, but it offers a good range of tools. Image output generally meets the quality standards required by professional publishing.

85.80

Microtek's top-of-the-line machine is noteworthy not only for the software it provides but also for its ease of installation. The bundled Photo-Styler image-editing package provides detailed color correction tools; RGB, HSL,and CMYK viewing; separation setup controls; and halftone editing just about all you could ask for to control high-end output. Add all this to its ability to scan a sharp, detailed image, and the ScanMaker, priced at under $2,000, is limited only by its sluggish scanning speed and an A4-size scanning window.

84.50

With a list price of $13,500, the Sharp JX600 ought to be great. This 55-pound, one-pass scanner includes an 11-by-17-inch scanning bed and transparency scanning as well as the impressive Image-In software for high-end image editing. It can scan at 600 dots per inch and will inter-polate up to 1,200 dpi. This scanner garnered the second-highest score for its high-resolution output (trailing only the Umax 1200) and a perfect

81.70

score for scanned convergence.

The Sharp JX-320's strengths are legion. To start, the price is right: 77.20
This is the least expensive scanner with a transparency-scanning option. The
software includes a high-end professional image-editing program, Image-In,
that provides CMYK, RGB, and HSV controls as well as an array of filters
and powerful editing tools that can tackle any image. The Sharp JX-320's
high-res output was smooth and sharp but did not reflect the level of detail
seen on the higher-scoring scanners.

The Scanmaster 3 Plus's gargantuan image window (measuring   76.30
11 by 17 inches), a transparency scanning add-on (a feature offered by only
a handful of scanners), and resolution interpolation of up to 1,200 dpi make
this scanner a very good choice. With film output quality that earned perfect
numbers for focus and contrast, the Howtek is excellent for professionals.
The only thing holding the Howtek back is its nonprofessional image-editing
software, ColorLab.

The bargain-priced Mustek MFS-3000C is the only scanner that   73.80
shipped with Picture Publisher Limited Edition from Micrografx. Picture
Publisher provides all the controls imaginable to improve an image's output,
including the ability to edit quartertones, control calibration, and edit and
view each CMYK plate before sending it to film. The 3000C's low price
and adequate hardware and software controls make it a good choice if
you need an office scanner to output images for business publishing.

 At $1,399, not only is the one-pass Epson ES-300C's price right but its   71.20
output hits the mark, too. The high-resolution output image earned a perfect
mark for its contrast, and scores dipped only slightly for focus, smoothness,
and color integrity. The Epson is a strong contender if you want an office
scanning solution for low-end desktop publishing. Be forewarned, however:
Although the hardware is a bargain, the user needs to have above-average
knowledge of the PC's IRQs and base address for installation.

While maintaining a high level of color integrity, the Abaton Scan   67.20
300/Color provides a strong set of scanning software controls. Buying a
professional image-editing program to replace Abaton's ColorLab would
make this scanner a strong addition to a desktop publishing setup.