

TOP 10 DIGITAL PROJECTORS & FLATBED SCANNERS

		Digital projectors	Brightness (Ansi lumens)	Lamp life (hours)	Lamp power (Watts)	Replacement bulb	Weight	Maximum resolution	Dimensions (wxdxh)
	1 CTX PS-5140 01923 810 800 www.ctxeurope.com LAST MONTH 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • £1,025 ex VAT • 3-year warranty • First review Feb 03 	1,400	2,000	150W	£249	2.7kg	1,024x1,280	288x243x91mm
			Costing just £1,025, the CTX is a sensational projector. The 1,400 Ansi lumens means that the screen will be visible in all but broad daylight. Run it at 800x600 and image quality is superb. It may not be quiet but for general office use the CTX, which is based on older LCD technology, punches well above its weight.						
	2 NEC LT260 0845 404 020 www.nec.co.uk LAST MONTH 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • £2,999 ex VAT • 3-year warranty • First review Dec 02 	2,100	1,500	220W	£298	2.9kg	1,600x1,200	260x275x92mm
			The LT260 offers an impressive image quality. Thanks to DLP (digital light processing) technology, a high brightness rating of 2,100 Ansi lumens and the fantastic 1,300:1 contrast ratio the picture is sharp and focused. NEC has also built in 802.11b wireless networking support to this 2.9kg unit.						
	3 Toshiba TLP-561 08704 423 433 www.projectors.toshiba.co.uk LAST MONTH 3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • £2,550 ex VAT • 3-year warranty • First review Dec 02 	1,300	2,000	150W	£300	3.9kg	1,024x768	260x352x96mm
			Toshiba's TLP-561, which is based on old-fashioned LCD technology, has a user-friendly onboard help system that guides you through the entire process of optimising the image. The contrast ratio may be a meagre 400:1, but the 1,300 Ansi lumens brightness rating is enough for most environments.						
	4 Sharp PG-M25X 0800 138 5051 www.sharp.co.uk/projectors LAST MONTH 4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • £3,675 ex VAT • 3-year warranty • First review Nov 02 	1,900	2,000	210W	£275	2.6kg	1,024x768	223x318x83mm
			The Sharp PG-M25X offers cutting-edge features, but at a price. Its brightness rating of 1,900 Ansi lumens ensures that images can be seen in virtually all light conditions. The DLP technology boasts the most up-to-date refinements and the 1,000:1 contrast ratio promises fantastic depth of colour.						
	5 Optoma EP753 01923 691 800 www.optoma.co.uk LAST MONTH 5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • £2,295 ex VAT • 3-year warranty • First review Sep 02 	1,600	2,000	200W	£289	2.9kg	1,024x768	277x225x85mm
			The EP753 will perform well thanks to its 1,600 Ansi lumens rating, while the 600:1 contrast ratio and smooth DLP (digital light processing) technology results in fantastic image quality. It might not have the big screen capabilities of the Toshiba, but if you want fine performance this device is an excellent choice.						

		Flatbed scanners	Maximum scanning area	Interface connection	Supported operating systems	True colour depth	Graphics and optical character recognition software
	1 Canon CanoScan D1250U2 08705 143 723 www.canon.co.uk LAST MONTH 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • £69 ex VAT • 1-year warranty • First review Aug 02 	A4 (216x297mm)	USB 1.1, USB 2.0	98/Me/2000/XP	48bit	ArcSoft PhotoStudio, ScanSoft OmniPage Pro
			The D1250U2 continues to sit at the top of the chart due to its excellent image quality and speedy USB 2.0 interface. Benefitting from the faster data transfer rates offered by USB 2.0, it cuts scanning times by over a third. The software package is generous and setup is simple. A worthy Best Buy.				
	2 HP Scanjet 5500c 0870 547 4747 www.hp.com/uk NEW	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • £212 ex VAT • 1-year warranty • First review Mar 03 	A4 (216x297mm)	USB 1.1, USB 2.0	98/Me/2000/XP	48bit	HP Suite, Iris OCR
			The 5500c is chock-full of features, generates high-quality scans and is without a doubt the fastest low-resolution scanner we've seen. At £212, though, it's very expensive. Multiple photos can be fed into the HP courtesy of the automatic feeder, while the transparent materials adapter is perfect for 35mm slides.				
	3 Canon CanoScan 5000F 08705 143 723 www.canon.co.uk NEW	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • £152 ex VAT • 1-year warranty • First review Mar 03 	A4 (216x297mm)	USB 1.1, USB 2.0	98/Me/2000/XP	48bit	ArcSoft PhotoStudio, ScanSoft OmniPage SE
			The third-placed Canon offers a strong glossy output across a range of resolutions. Times are good, too, at 22 seconds for an A4 colour scan. The benefits of the enhanced USB 2.0 interface are clear – the 12Mbps speed of USB 1.1 is easily eclipsed by the 480Mbps pace of USB 2.0.				
	4 Umax Astra 4500 0870 906 3304 www.umax.co.uk LAST MONTH 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • £59 ex VAT • 2-year warranty • First review Aug 02 	A4 (216x297mm)	USB 1.1	98/Me/2000/XP	48bit	MGI PhotoSuite SE, TextBridge 2.0 SE
			The Umax features the older USB 1.1 technology and is finally starting to show its age. It cannot match the Best Buy Canon's speed or image quality. Resulting scans were slightly dark and required further adjustment. The Umax does come with a good software bundle, though, and is a truly budget model.				
	5 Visioneer OneTouch 8700 01483 445 480 www.visioneer-europe.com LAST MONTH 3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • £83 ex VAT • 1-year warranty • First review Jan 02 	A4 (216x297mm)	USB 1.1	98/Me/2000/XP	48bit	MGI PhotoSuite, PaperPro Deluxe, TextBridge Pro
			The Visioneer OneTouch couples an optical resolution of 1,200x4,800dpi with 48bit colour depth. The results are crystal-clear quality and speedy delivery. However, the 8700 is a bulky model and an A4 file scanned at the highest resolution takes up to 1.5GB, so you needs lots of storage space.				

Buying advice: scanners

Professional scanners can cost thousands, but for home and small business needs you won't need to spend more than £200. Optical resolution is a measure of what a scanner's hardware can achieve; 600x1,200dpi (dots per inch) is widely available but some high-end scanners boast resolutions in excess

of 1,200x2,400dpi. Higher resolutions use more pixels to give a greater level of detail, but remember that the higher the resolution the more disk space you'll use. Colour depth indicates the amount of distinct colours that can be recognised – it's best to opt for 48bit colour.

Scanners generally come with all the necessary software, although you're likely to get Lite versions. OCR (optical character

recognition) software scans printed text and translates it into documents you can edit. In terms of photo-editing software, Adobe's Photoshop Elements is one of the best packages.

USB 1.1 is the standard interface for scanners. FireWire units are available and USB 2.0 is the quickest option, but unless your PC has these ports you'll need to buy specialist cards.