TOP 10 DIGITAL PROJECTORS & FLATBED SCANNERS

Digital projectors	LCD/DLP techn-ology	Max brightness	Lamp life (hours)	Dimensions (wxdxh)	Max resolu-tion	Wireless facilities	Econ-omy mode	Noise
		Contrast ratio	Replace-ment bulb	Weight		Memory card		
1 — InFocus X1 0800 028 6470 www.infocus.com LAST MONTH 1	• £999 ex VAT • 2-year parts & labour warranty • First review Apr 03	DDR DLP 1,000 Ansi lumens 2,000:1	3,000 varies	249x318x106mm 3.1kg	800x600 (SVGA)	no no	no	37dB
	Not only is the InFocus cheap to buy and run, it's equipped with cutting-edge DDR DLP technology that handles dark colours well. The X1's clear display and sharp definition make it adept at both video and Windows apps. The device isn't particularly quiet in operation so it's more suited to the office than home environment.							
2 — NEC LT220 0845 404 020 www.nec.co.uk LAST MONTH 2	• £1,999 ex VAT • 3-year European onsite warranty • First review Apr 03	SDR DLP 1,800 Ansi lumens 600:1	1,500/2,000 £298	260x275x92mm 3.2kg	800x600 (SVGA)	yes yes	yes	32dB/29dB
	The LT220 may be pricey but it's a superior projector that boasts one of the best images in the chart. Business users will appreciate the clean text display while cinephiles will relish the bright tints and warm hues. Another bonus is the large screen and lack of system noise – it can be restricted to a near-inaudible 29dB.							
3 — CTX PS-5140 01923 810 800 www.ctxeurope.com LAST MONTH 3	• £1,025 ex VAT • 2-year parts & labour warranty • First review Mar 03	LCD 1,400 Ansi lumens 400:1	2,000 £249	283x243x91mm 2.7kg	800x600 (SVGA)	no no	no	37dB
	Thanks to its brightness rating, the value-for-money CTX offers a display that remains visible in the lightest of conditions, although its basic LCD technology means the image isn't as sharp or well defined as the Best Buy (which uses DDR DLP). On office apps, in particular, you'll notice a reduction in colour scheme purity.							
4 — Epson EMP-53 0800 220 546 www.epson.co.uk LAST MONTH 4	• £1,399 ex VAT • 3-year European, 2-year worldwide warranty • First review Apr 03	LCD 1,700 Ansi lumens 500:1	1,500/2,000 £299	315x240x97mm 2.9kg	800X600 (SVGA)	no no	yes	36dB/33dB
	At just £1,399, the EMP-53 offers a massive screen size for less money. The contrast ratio is above average for an LCD model, but the SVGA resolution means that pictures lack depth of colour. A high brightness rating means it will work in the lightest conditions, while the powerful remote control is another bonus.							
5 — NEC LT260 0845 404 020 www.nec.co.uk LAST MONTH 5	• £3,499 ex VAT • 3-year European warranty • First review Jan 03	DDR DLP 2,100 Ansi lumens 1,600:1	1,500/2,000 £298	260x275x92mm 2.9kg	1,600 x1,200	yes yes	yes	32dB/29dB
	With its peerless features set and glorious image quality, the LT260 is the current gold standard. Wireless network facilities do away with the need to be connected to the projector. Users can copy their presentation to a PC Card, enabling executives to leave their notebooks in the office. The LT260's only fault is its huge price tag.							

Flatbed scanners	Inter-face conn-ection	Sup-ported operating systems	True colour depth	Optical resolution	Trans-parency adapter	Dimensions (wxdxh)	Graphics software
				Software interpolated		Weight	Optical character recognition software
1 — Canon CanoScan D1250U2 08705 143 723 www.canon.co.uk LAST MONTH 1	• £69 ex VAT • 1-year warranty • First review Aug 02	USB 2.0	98/Me/2000/XP	48bit	1,200x2,400dpi 9,600dpi	optional	257x460x71mm 2.4kg	ArcSoft PhotoStudio ScanSoft OmniPage Pro
	Combining a top-notch spec and low price tag, the D1250U2 refuses to budge from the Best Buy spot. The competition might be able to match Canon's offering in terms of performance but, considering its high-quality features, the Canon is unbeatable when it comes to value for money. The software package is generous, too.							
2 — Visioneer OneTouch 9020 01483 445 480 www.visioneer-europe.com LAST MONTH 2	• £110 ex VAT • 1-year warranty • First review May 03	USB 2.0	98/Me 2000/XP	48bit	1,200x4,800dpi 4,800dpi	built-in	432x302x66mm 3.9kg	Photoshop Elements TextBridge Classic
	The 3.9kg OneTouch 9020 is a robust model that, thanks to its quick-scan buttons, is easy to use and ideal for novices. It's reasonably priced but still costs a good deal more than the Best Buy Canon. Indeed, if the top-placed scanner wasn't such a bargain the Visioneer could quite easily nab the number one spot.							
3 — HP Scanjet 5500c 0870 547 4747 www.hp.com/uk LAST MONTH 3	• £212 ex VAT • 1-year warranty • First review Mar 03	USB 2.0	98/Me/2000/XP	48bit	1,200x2,400dpi 9,600dpi	built-in	545x317x167mm 7.2kg	HP Suite Iris OCR
	At a resolution of 300dpi the 5500c took seven seconds to scan a colour A4 page, making it the fastest low-resolution model in the chart. Scan quality is also fantastic – the 48bit colour depth is rich, accurate and more than a match for any of the other competitors' scans. All of this comes at a price, though: a steep £212.							
4 — Canon CanoScan 5000F 08705 143 723 www.canon.co.uk LAST MONTH 4	• £179 ex VAT • 1-year warranty • First review Mar 03	USB 2.0	98/Me/2000/XP	48bit	2,400x4,800dpi 9,600dpi	built-in	278x508x107mm 3.4kg	PhotoStudio, PhotoBase ScanSoft OmniPage SE
	The 5000F isn't cheap but it offers plenty of features to keep professional users happy while being straightforward enough for a novice. The USB 2.0 interface is used to good effect and is best demonstrated at high resolutions – it outstrips even the speedy third-placed HP at 1,200dpi (dots per inch) and beyond.							
5 — Umax Astra 6700 0870 906 3300 www.umax.co.uk LAST MONTH 5	• £127 ex VAT • 1-year warranty • First review May 03	USB 2.0	98/98SE/Me/2000/XP/Mac	48bit	1,200x4,800dpi 9,600dpi	optional	578x272x89mm 2.8kg	MGI PhotoSuite III Abbyy FineReader Sprint
	The Astra scans an A4 colour page in less than 70 seconds – some 20 seconds slower than the Best Buy – but it's fast enough for most users' needs. The bulky device takes up vital deskspace, though, and it's lightweight with a flimsy lid. Scan quality was reasonable without being outstanding, particularly in terms of colour.							

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 on the market.

USB 2.0 is becoming the standard interface and is also the quickest option, although FireWire units are available too. Remember that unless your PC has these ports you'll need to buy specialist cards.