onnectix. $229 US. Special $30 rebate offer through July 31, 1996. Requirements: 68020 Macintosh, System 7.0, 8MB RAM, 5 MB free hard disk space, free serial port, available ADB port, 8-bit color display. Recommended: 68040 Macintosh, System 7.1, 16-bit display.

Since Connectix introduced the black-and-white QuickCam in 1984, the digital camera has been one of the best-selling add-ons for the Macintosh. QuickCam owners have been salivating for a color version. It is here now and is well worth the wait.

The Color QuickCam is an eyeball-shaped digital color camera the size of a tennis ball. The camera lets you take photographs and make movies without an interface card. You can take still pictures in millions of colors at 640 x 480 pixels—just make sure you have good lighting. An adjustable F/1.6 aperture, 5.7 mm lens with 48-degree view lets you focus from less than one inch to infinity. Despite its low cost, the Color QuickCam has a glass, not plastic, lens, and the quality shows.

QuickMovie, provided with Color QuickCam, is a great, no-frills video editor. QuickMovie lets you capture QuickTime movies in real time, stop action, and time lapse. Your movies' maximum sizes and frame rates depend on your Macintosh's processing power. The advertised frame rates of 24 frames per second (fps) at 160 x 120 pixels and 16-bit depth, and 15 fps with 320 x 240 pixels can be easily achieved with any Power Macintosh. Slower processors, however, will be hard pressed to achieve these rates. Also provided is a QuickSaver module that works with the popular After Dark screen saver.

The Color QuickCam's features are well thought out, down to the smallest details. Not only can you capture the entire QuickCam image, but you can adjust the area of the image to be captured. In other words, you can crop before, rather than after, you shoot. A timer feature lets you be in the pictures. An auto-capture feature lets you automatically take photos at specified intervals for time lapse photography. You can even select which day you want a photo automatically taken. QuickCam's proprietary compressor-decompressor does a good job of providing the compression necessary for videoconferencing. And QuickPICT lets you save pictures in various file formats: PICT (for use in any Mac imaging program), TIFF (for use in Windows graphics applications) and JPEG (great for use on Web pages).

QuickMovie not only lets you record new QuickTime movies, it also lets you replace video in an existing movie. You can also flatten a movie so it can be viewed on a QuickTime-equipped Windows computer. All these features are so easy to use, and the installation so easy, you can be up and running without reading the concise, well-written manual. (But do yourself a favor and read the manual; it offers several helpful hints.)

What can you do with the Color QuickCam? You can use it as a security camera. You can use it for videoconferencing with either Connectix's own VideoPhone [see MacSense 3/96, ed.] or CU-See Me. You can create live Web pages by automatically updating images on your Web site. You can capture still photos from QuickCam and, with a mouse click, drop them into

email messages.

Using the QuickCards accessory, you can create personalized, multimedia greeting cards for occasions such as birthdays and anniversaries. While Color QuickCam comes with a small number of QuickCards templates, you can pick up a CD’s worth of these multimedia templates, as well as a tripod for your QuickCam, for a few extra bucks. The really nice thing about QuickCards is that a finished e-card is a self-running, multimedia production that will play back on a Macintosh or PC without any additional software.

The Color QuickCam offers good, but not great, quality. It performs poorly under harsh lighting outdoors. However, Connectix says a lens adapter that lets you attach standard lenses and filters, including a daylight filter, will be available soon. Although the Color QuickCam works fine on a wide range of Macs, it’s not compatible with the Mac Classic, Mac Plus, Mac SE, Powerbook 100 or Mac Portable. Finally, because the QuickCam must be plugged into either your printer or modem port, it is a good idea to buy a serial port switcher, plug it into your printer port and connect both your printer and QuickCam to the switcher. This way you can switch between peripherals with the turn of a knob.

here are many practical applications for the Color QuickCam. You can use it for basic videoconferencing, low-level presentations, and prototyping multimedia productions. But let us confess: the Color QuickCam is as fine a toy as you can buy for your Mac. You can keep your kids entertained for hour mugging for the camera. You can take photos of the family dog. You can send a family movie to Grandma (assuming she’s wired). Buy the Color QuickCam if you need a low cost way of adding graphics to your newsletters. But the best reason to buy this nifty little device is simply because it is so much fun. Just be prepared to take the rest of the day off.

daseller@earthlink.net

pple Computer. $599 US. Requirements:
68030 Macintosh, System 7.5, 12MB RAM,
20MB free hard drive space. Recommended:
16MB RAM, 16-bit color display.
Contact: (408) 996-1010, www.apple.com.

The price of color flatbed scanners has fallen dramatically in recent times. What was once an item exclusive to prepress houses and wealthy hackers is now inexpensive enough to be placed on the desk of almost every home office. The decrease in price has come hand-in-hand with an increase in quality.

With the introduction of the Color OneScanner 600/27, Apple offers Mac users a well-rounded scanning package that includes an outstanding entry level color scanner, optical character recognition software, and one-click faxing and copying (when combined with a fax modem and printer).

The Color OneScanner 600/27 has an optical resolution of 300 x 600, meaning that the scanner can see 300 points per inch horizontally and 600 ppi vertically. Using its internal software, Apple boasts the scanner can interpolate up to 2400 x 2400 ppi. When a scanner uses interpolation to achieve such resolutions, it is essentially using the color values of pixels it can see to make educated guesses at the nature of pixels it cannot see—much like enlarging an image in Photoshop. The result of interpolation, however, is often blurry and inaccurate. If you absolutely need scan resolutions higher than 600 ppi, you're better off looking to a more capable (and more expensive) drum or slide scanner.

Color quality of the Color OneScanner 600/27, however, is not an issue. As is reflected in its name, the Color OneScanner 600/27 is capable of scanning images at a depth of 27 bits. While the image transferred to the Macintosh contains only 24-bit color, the OneScanner uses the extra bits to more accurately capture color before downsampling to 24 bits. Using Apple's ColorSync software to ensure color consistency across input, display, and output devices, color scans offer a superb match to the original. In all but the rarest cases, color saturation and balance are excellent. The only notable complaint we have about the OneScanner is that scanned images appear to be a tad darker than the originals. Thankfully, subtle variances in darker components of an image are still detected by the scanner and may be drawn out either by the scan module's Tone and Threshold settings or the Brightness and Contrast controls of the included image editor.

At a mere 16 inches deep, 11 inches wide and 3 inches high, the Color OneScanner 600/27 is small and tidy unit which will fit easily onto most desktops. The scanner has a maximum scan size of 8.5 x 11.7 inches (8.5 x 14 inches with the optional $329 US document feeder), and its pop-off cover adjusts to accommodate thicker material such as books or boxes. The SCSI-2 device offers both 50-pin and 25-pin SCSI connectors, SCSI ID selection from 0 to 7, and the option of internal SCSI termination.

In addition to the requisite scanner plug-in for Adobe Photoshop and similar applications, the OneScanner includes a wonderful new software package from Apple called OneScanner Dispatcher. A great one-stop shop for all your scanning needs, Dispatcher provides a well constructed scanning interface, a simple (but elegant) image editor and a straight-forward archive utility. Combined with an existing fax modem and a printer, Dispatcher simulates a full function fax and a personal photo copier—with a simple click, you can fax a friend or make 10 copies of a document.

To help out around the office, the Color OneScanner 600/27 ships with Xerox's TextBridge 3.0 optical character recognition software. While TextBridge's interface and manuals are not

terribly impressive, accuracy of character recognition is excellent—so long as you have a high resolution scan and a clear original. The software can automatically and intelligently recognize columns and in-line graphics, often eliminating the need for manual zoning. For the more advanced user seeking customization, TextBridge 3.0 is fully AppleScriptable.

he Color OneScanner 600/27 offers a complete color scanning solution for budget-conscious home business owners and digital artists. With the included OneScanner Dispatcher software, scanning, storing, faxing, and even photocopying are a breeze. At $599 US the Color OneScanner 600/27 faces some stiff competition from the less capable, but lower priced Hewlett Packard 4p scanner (300 x 300 ppi, $499), however, the OneScanner's color quality remains unmatched by any scanner in its price range. If you don't require extremely high resolution scanning, the Color OneScanner 600/27 will make a fine, flexible addition to your office equipment.

MacSenseED@aol.com

torm Software, $249 US. Requirements: 68040 Macintosh,
8MB RAM, System 7.1, CD-ROM, 10MB of free hard disk space.
Contact: (415) 961-6600, www.easyphoto.com/storm/.

Want to add a photo to a newsletter to personalize it? Want to add photos to your Web page to jazz it up? Want to have the flexibility of using any photo rather than just those on a PhotoCD? Want to do it without having to spend $700 or more for a digital camera? The EasyPhoto Reader tackles the task in a Polaroid minute.

This nifty little device (5.5" x 6") is actually a small 24-bit color scanner designed to capture photos up to 5" x 7". The accompanying software allows you to crop photos and alter their brightness, contrast, and orientation. EasyPhoto also automatically creates a thumbnail gallery or catalog of photos which you can annotate or view as a series of slides. The slide show, with captioned photos, can be shared with others.

Using the EasyPhoto Reader is about as straightforward as it gets. Simply plug it into the serial port, plug in the power cord, put a photo into the Reader and press Start. Storm Software has done a wonderful job with the software. To some users, the software may look familiar. That's because the same programmers developed the PhotoFlash software for the Apple QuickTake camera. Storm's implementation of the Apple Help Guide is one of the best

we’ve seen, and the instructions provided throughout the package make it a snap to use EasyPhoto right out of the box. In less than 30 minutes, we had installed, scanned, modified, and printed three photos.

There are a few annoying aspects to the EasyPhoto Reader. Photos tend to scan in a bit low in contrast. The manual brightness control dial on the Reader itself needs an orientation mark or center detent so the user has a better sense of the setting. The software brightness and contrast controls should display numerical values for more precise use. The user should be allowed to perform slightly more sophisticated color corrections. And the special pass-through connector that apparently is included with the Windows version of the Reader should be included on the Mac version so you can share the serial port with your modem or printer.

f you want to scan photos to add punch to your documents, illustrate a point or electronically organize your photos, we strongly recommend the EasyPhoto Reader. We like its small footprint and simple operation. Storm has intentionally limited the features in the EasyPhoto software so that it does just what is necessary for the average home user, leaving high-end photo manipulation to other software such as Adobe Photoshop. Overall, the EasyPhoto Reader is a great example of bringing technology (JPEG compression, image enhancement and acceleration, 24-bit color scanning) to the user in an extremely easy-to-use package.

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