

Film Scanner

The term “Film Scanner” can refer to a dedicated slide and negative film scanner or to a “capture” type scanner.

A dedicated film scanner is a type of optical scanner designed specifically for digitizing slides and film negatives so they can be viewed and processed on a computer. These types of devices are capable of delivering much higher measured resolutions and measured dynamic ranges than flatbed, document or capture scanners. Higher measured resolutions are necessary due to the unusually small physical size of the media and higher measured dynamic ranges are required due to the exceptionally broad range of colors possible in this type media.

The “capture” type scanner is a device for digitizing photographic prints and slides based on the reprographic camera. They typically utilize a CMOS camera sensor, rather than the CCD type sensor used in higher quality scanners. Essentially they “take a digital picture” of a photographic print or slide using a built-in digital camera. However, although a CMOS sensor is roughly equivalent to a CCD sensor in capability, its implementation in camera sensors causes it to record only about one-third of the actual data from the photo or slide that a CCD sensor would record, leaving the rest to software interpolation. This results in a generally lower quality digitized image with less detail and less accurate colors. These scanners have very few resolution options and are best avoided if the quality of the scan is of any importance. Capture type scanners are easily distinguished from proper film scanners, as they list their resolution in megapixels rather than dpi.

Negative Scanner

The term “Negative Scanner” can refer to a dedicated slide and negative film scanner, a flatbed scanner with a transparency adapter or to a “capture” type scanner.

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Flatbed scanners are primarily document scanners, and while a quality flatbed scanner is acceptable for digitizing photographic prints, they must rely on additional complex optics and lighting to scan slides, which are usually only about 1.5” across. Due to this reliance on additional optics, these types of devices are less capable of achieving the much higher measured resolutions necessary for high quality conversion of slides and film negatives to digital. Additionally, because slides must be scanned together in batches, transparency adapters tend to suffer from light leakage. This occurs when light bleeds between slides in the adapter tray, affecting the effective dynamic range of the scanner. A dedicated film scanner, which scans one slide at a time in a small sealed compartment, will generally achieve much higher measured resolutions and dynamic ranges and produce much higher quality scans.

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Slide Film Scanner

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Scanner for Slides

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Photo Negative Scanner

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35mm Film Scanner

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Photo and Slide Scanner

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Photo Slide Scanner

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Slide Digitizer

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