



First Look report at Image Access WideTek 36 Wide format Scanner

First Look at the Image Access WideTek 36 Wide-Format Scanner

Image Access released a revised version of its 36" wide WideTek series scanner. Now a chassis D model, it replaces the previous version designated as chassis C. The new scanner has new and faster CCD cameras, increasing the speed to a whopping 12.4 ips in both color and monochrome at 200 dpi resolution. The WideTek 36 is the fastest wide-format scanner in the world with a color speed that is more than three times faster than its closest competitors! The WideTek 36 targets the CAD, GIS, and copy services markets.



The new revision of the Image Access WideTek 36 scanner

Features	WideTek 36
Scan Width	36"
Monochrome Speed @200dpi	12.4 ips
Color Speed @200dpi	12.4 ips
Optical Resolution	600 dpi
Scanning Technology	CCD
Field Upgradable	No
Price*	\$14,790

*Price estimated based on a €9,990 price tag



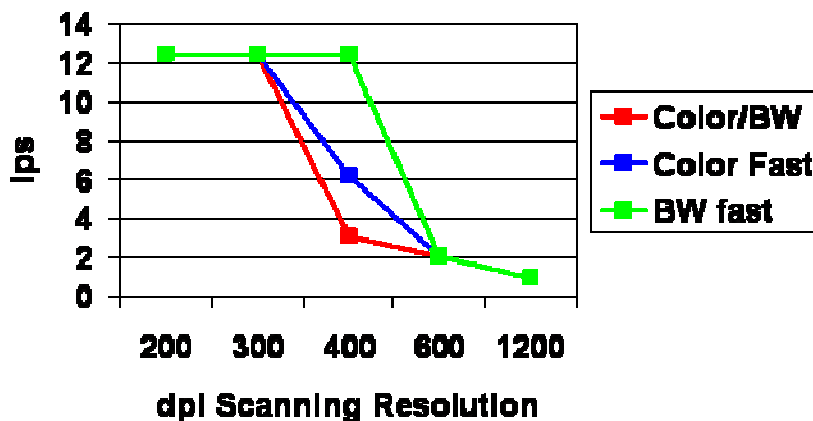
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Features and Technology

What is remarkable about the new WideTek 36 scanner is its color performance speed. Not only is this the fastest wide-format scanner in the world, but it beats its closest competitors by a factor of more than three. How is this possible in the very competitive wide-format scanner segment? The answer is in the special design of the WideTek 36 scanner.

To avoid the inherent bottleneck of using a relatively slow (yet common) USB 2.0 interface when transferring large amounts of uncompressed color data, the WideTek 36 has an onboard Linux computer that takes the color data stream directly from the CCD cameras and compresses it on the fly to an internal JPEG format prior to transferring the image to the destination computer. Instead of transferring a 400 dpi E-size image that has approximately 800 MB of uncompressed data, which most competitors do, the WideTek 36 only transfers the JPEG compressed image that is typically less than 40 MB to the destination computer. This method completely eliminates the bottleneck of using the previously mentioned 480 Mbit USB 2.0 interface. The WideTek 36 also uses a 1000 Mbit LAN interface, further increasing the transfer speed.

WideTek 36 Scanning Speed



The WideTek 36 scanning performance as a function of scanning resolution

The WideTek 36 is a 600 dpi optical scanner with a maximum resolution of 1,200 dpi. Resolution can be varied in steps of 1 dpi. The internal color capture is done at 36 bit in color, surpassing the 24-bit industry standard, to the computer via JPEG, PNM, or TIF as well as an optional PDF format for approximately \$450 more. The 36-bit internal color depth is lower than most competitors that now offer 48-bit internal color depth. One could argue that if you are only using 24 bit, then 36 bit should be enough. That may be true, however when using standard



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sRGB with a default gamma of 2.2, you can see color banding in the black area — something that is not visible with a 48-bit internal color capture.

The WideTek 36 is a LAN scanner connecting directly to the local LAN and accessed via any Internet browser (e.g., Internet Explorer, Firefox, Google Chrome, and Safari) from a Windows, Linux, or Mac environment. There are no applications to install on your local computer, and you have a choice of using the scanner as a walk-up scanner and copier from the built-in touch screen interface or from your computer via an Internet browser.

The WideTek 36 uses white LED lights for illumination of scanned documents. This gives a useful lifetime of more than 50,000 operational hours, making it unlikely that you ever have to replace the lamp. This capability also gives the scanner the ability for instant-on access, making it suitable as a walk-up copier.

The WideTek 36 is easy to configure, and you can send the scans directly to a LAN printer or to any computer on the LAN via FTP and email. If you are located remotely, you can use the optional USB memory stick interface located next to the touch screen console and scan directly to it. This is very handy for using the scanner as a walk-up copier. The USB interface is an option for an additional \$450.

To facilitate the need to scan into popular applications like Adobe Photoshop, Corel Draw, Omnipage, and more, Image Access offers new software called Scan2Edit to give the operator the ability to use these applications for editing the scanned image.

Lastly the WideTek 36 is fully RoHS (Restriction on Hazard Substance) and Energy Star compliant. Also, since the scanner is Web based, the operator can upgrade the scanner firmware directly over the Internet.

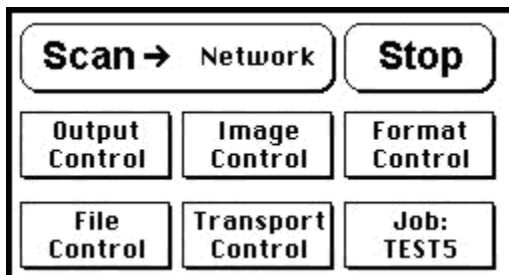
Market Position

The WideTek 36 color scanner addresses the traditional CAD, GIS, and copy services markets where high productivity is important. Its price of €9,990 is neither the least expensive nor the most expensive 36" scanner on the market; however you do get the world's fastest scanner for both monochrome and color scanning. Furthermore, due to its versatility in addressing the needs of various market segments spanning from GIS to CAD to copy services, it offers a high level of productivity. In the US market place the WideTek 36 scanner is sold through Bowe Bell+Howell under an OEM agreement. Bowe Bell+Howell has not official announce this model but we expect with the typical delay of OEM type relationship that it will hit the US market later Q1 or Q2 2009.



Stanley Adams Group Recommendations

For performance-conscious buyers, the Image Access WideTek 36 scanner is unique in its class with a whopping 12.4 ips scanning speed at 200 dpi. No other manufacturer matches that performance, and you do get a lot for the €9,990 (\$14,790) price. Furthermore its LAN-based interface makes it very flexible for fitting into a mid- to large-size organization where the focus is on productivity. We therefore rated the WideTek 36 as highly recommended.



The WideTek 36 scanner is easy to operate through the built-in touch display, making it very useful for walk-up copying needs.

Pro	Con
Color and monochrome performance	Price
Operate through any Internet browser and environment	Only 36-bit internal color capture, making is less usable for the graphic and fine art environment
Long life white LED light for illumination	Lack of thick media scanning
Energy Star compliant	
No warm-up time	
Fast Gigabit interface	

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About the Author

Henrik Vestermark is an independent consultant and professional who has worked in the wide-format scanner and printer industry since 1988. His expertise includes all aspects of the wide-format digital capture market, and particularly focuses on the wide-format scanner industry.