How to Rate a Scanner based on a Value Price Index

With approximate 70 different scanner models on the market today, it is a challenge to decide which wide-format scanner is right for you. Not until recently has there been any standardized way to evaluate a scanner's specification and to make comparisons easy across scanner models and scanner brands. The Stanley Adams Group has developed a first approach to answer this question by introduction our value/price index for wide-format scanners.

Four Fundamental Factors for the Value/Price index

The Value Price Index has been developed based on four fundamental factors of a wide-format scanner that customers use in determining which scanner to purchase:

- Scanning quality
- Scanning performance
- Price
- Maximum scanning width

The last two are tangible factors that you can easily determine by researching scanner models on the Internet. It's much more difficult to assets the first two factors. How do you measure scanning quality and scanning performance?

Scanning quality is the hardest one to qualify as information about a scanner's quality is not available through the scanner manufacturers, and unfortunately there's little independent research that measures scanner quality. Despite this, we need a way to create our scanner value index and the best available method is to use the optical resolution of a scanner. However we need to note that optical scanning resolution is only an indicator of scanning quality not a measure of scanning quality.

Scanner performance is easier to deal with because you can find scanning speed information from scanner manufacturer's specifications that state the scanning black and white speed and color speed in inches per seconds (ips). However, we must make some adjustments in order to use that metric to take in account an end user's perspective. As has been observed by many scanning service companies, a doubling of black and white performance numbers does not lead to a doubling in real life production throughput. The same is observed for color scanning but here the lack of throughput is contributed mostly by the bottleneck in the computer and in the scanner interface to the computer. The bottleneck is hard disk and image processing that's unable to handle the amount of color data transmitted from the scanner to the computer plus the saturation of the typical USB interface between the scanner and the computer. This bottleneck comes into play when dealing with color scans above 1ips at 400dpi. To reflect this

discrepancy, the color scanning speed should be adjusted using a logarithm to flatten out the color performance and black and white performance. This works really well in our model based on these observations.

The scanning width and price is still the most used selection criteria for a scanner purchase. The scanning width is obvious and hard to compromise, as you need a scanner with a scan width that matches the maximum width of your poster, maps, drawings and other documents.

The price can be negotiable between you and the scanner dealer. In today's highly competitive market, the price is always a winning factor. It therefore makes sense that price is measured up against the value of a scanner expressed with the scan width, scan quality and scanning performance.
The price come in two disguise the actual sticker price and a price moderator. The price moderator compensate for different warranty length. e.g. two scanner priced the same but one with a 1 year onsite and the other with a 3 years onsite. How much is the extra two years warranty worth? Our price moderator compensates and realigned this information.

This paper was written by Henrik Vestermark Stanley Adams Group, Inc.
Web: www.StanleyAdamsGroup.com
E-mail: contact@StanleyAdamsGroup.com

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.