

Digitising originals

A variety of scanners are available for creating digital copies of images that exist as print, negatives or transparencies. A reproduction house will scan your original for you using an expensive drum scanner to obtain a high resolution file of very high quality. The price for this service is also appreciably high. A more economical alternative is to have a Kodak Photo CD made when you have your film processed and printed.

However the affordability of scanners for home use has made this a viable option for many and there is a variety available. Most common are flatbed scanners designed for scanning from prints or paper based originals. Some of these are now available with transparency adaptors but it is not advisable to use these for scanning 35mm film. Film scanners will produce the best results of all.

The scanning process is similar regardless of the specific scanner or software being used. First, the scanning software needs to be told what type of image you're scanning and how you want it to be scanned. Once the scanning process is complete you'll have the opportunity to make any necessary adjustments. And finally, when you are satisfied with the scanned image you can save it on your computer's hard drive or a disc.

Step by step guide to using a flatbed scanner

The following assumes you will be using a flatbed scanner for digitising photographs.

1. From the file menu in Photoshop, choose import and select the necessary software or name of the device you will use to scan.
2. To begin, set the correct mode (the type of image you're scanning determines the mode). Select the appropriate setting for a photographic print.
3. Select *colour* for your colour photograph or greyscale for black and white photographs.

Note the file size of the greyscale image is one third of the size it would be if it were scanned in colour. There are however times when it is desirable to scan a black and white photo in colour because it does contain colour information eg. a vintage photo, a print with a warm paper tone

There are other settings available for scanning a particular type of item. Those settings are -

Line Art:	for images composed of black and white blocks with no grey areas, such as logos and illustrations
Half-tones:	for printed images such as books, newspapers or magazines

3. Ensure the glass bed of the scanner is clean and dust free. Place the image face down on the glass aligning it with any indicators. Close the door above it and click *preview* or *prescan*.
4. The scanner will make one pass and a low-resolution image of the entire scanning bed will appear in the preview window. To avoid digitising the white space around your image, you need to tell the scanner where on the bed it is. Use your select tool (usually a dotted line used to frame your image) to define the area of your image.
5. Next, select the appropriate *size* for your scan. If the size is set at 100% the result will be an image the same size as the original.
6. The most important decision you will make concerns *resolution*. Resolution is the number of pixels per inch that make up an image. The resolution you choose now will determine the quality of your final output. Refer to the resolution handout for detailed information to guide you.
7. Once the scanning mode, colour, resolution and size are selected, the computer has all of the information it needs to scan your image. Click on *scan* and wait. When scanning is complete, the image will appear in a window of Photoshop. You may have to close your scanning software to work with it.
8. It is necessary to save your new image after you have made any enhancements or adjustments. For detailed information on appropriate file formats, refer to Adrian Davies article, "All you wanted to know about file formats."

Recommended Websites

"A Few Scanning Tips" by Wayne Fulton
<http://www.scantips.com/>