

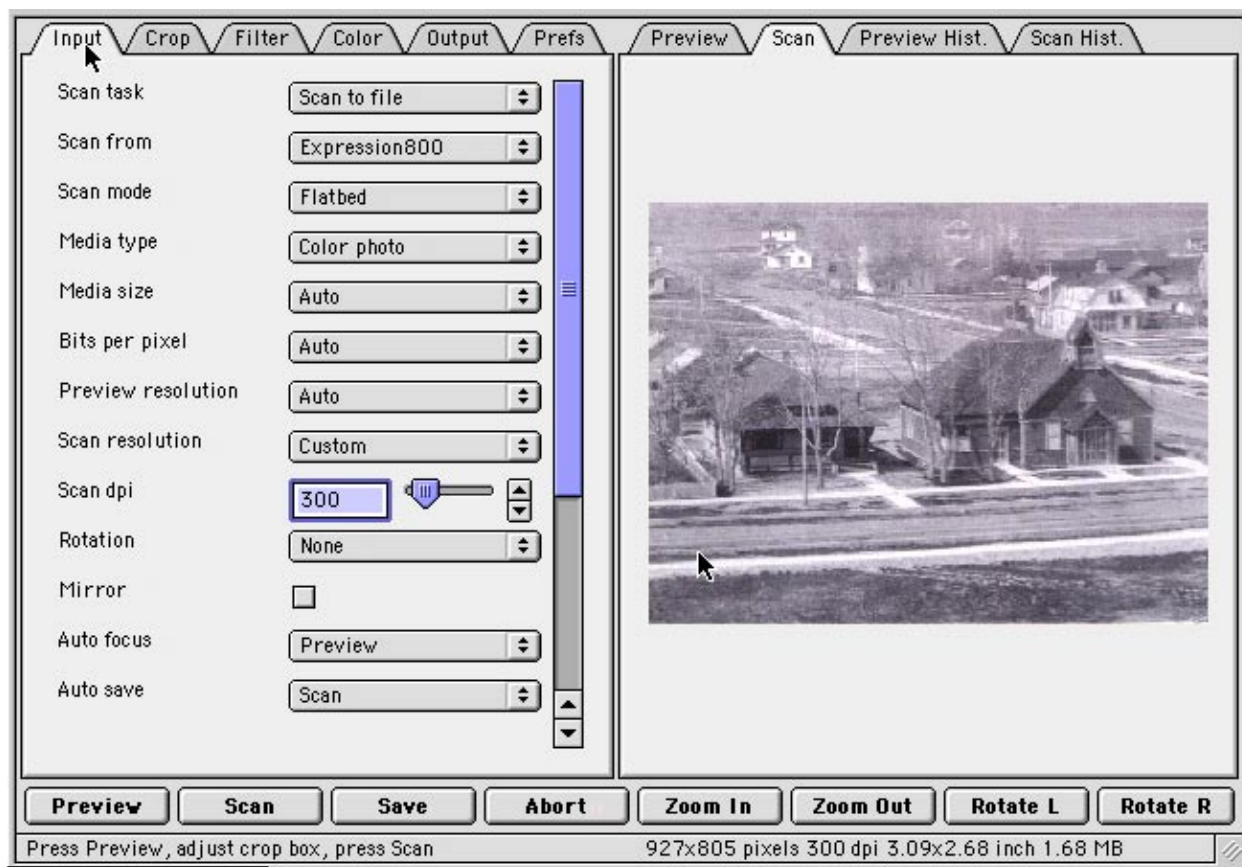
VueScan

by Scott Armstrong,
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Are you unhappy with your scanner software? VueScan, a shareware application is quick and easy. It is only about 2MB. With OSX, just double click on the *dmg* file which holds the application. Drag that to your Applications folder or anywhere on your hard drive.

VueScan is a stand alone program that requires little overhead in the way of files and doesn't change any system files on your hard drive, which might cause problems with other applications. VueScan is also not reliant on TWAIN. VueScan supports a great number of scanners including

scanners, many Canon scanners, except the LiDE 50 and 80, many older model scanners including my old and not so common Linotype scanner. (An Email to Hamrick software was responded to within one day. Ed Hamrick said he should have software compatibility for the Canon LiDE 50 scanner in about a month.) I fired up my old G3 PowerMac, my old Epson Expression scanner and upgraded to OS9 and downloaded the OS9 version of VueScan. I started the OS9 version and it also launched quickly on my older 250MHz G3. Clicking on the Preview button produced a preview scan quickly. By default it automatically selected the image.



VueScan offers many controls over scanning

many older SCSI scanners, making it a real deal for those who otherwise might not be able to use their older scanner in OSX.

I started the program and it launched quickly. I found my Canon LiDE 50 USB scanner was not one of the supported scanners. A list on the website shows that VueScan supports all Epson

When VueScan opens the window has six tabs; Input, Crop, Filter, Color and Output—plus eight buttons across the bottom—Preview, Scan, Save, Abort, Zoom In, Zoom Out, Rotate Left and Rotate Right. The default tab settings is the simple mode. This shows less options, for a simple scan.

By selecting Show All settings, the user can customize a large number of scanning settings. The additional settings are fairly vast. This is for the user who wants to have a lot of control over the configurations of a scan.

By first clicking on the Preview tab, a preview is created of the scanner bed. Next the scan area

must be selected. I noticed that the software automatically selected the image area of the scan. This is a great timesaving feature. It was very accurate with the automatic scan. If the default area is not what you desire you can change the selected area by dragging the bounding box lines. The scan button then performs the full scan.

The scan resolution tab has five settings; Email, Web, Print, Edit and Archive. There is no indication in the window as to what those settings mean, except the obvious. Looking at the file size, each option increases the file size making a better quality scan. A scan resolution tab includes resolutions from 25 dpi to 1600 dpi plus automatic and custom. You can choose one of the presets or custom, which adds an input setting with a slider and an up and down arrow in addition to a dialog box for manual entry of the dpi setting. I wish all software had this feature. I like having the option of using a slider and/or an up & down arrow. This method of entry doesn't show up until the custom setting is selected. I am used to the software having the dpi setting more plainly visible.

After scanning the image, the file is automatically saved in the VueScan folder and the file opens up in the default image editor. The default editor is selectable with a tab and can be changed if you use more than one image editor. You can use the Save option, but the software does this all for you—something I like a lot. The file is already named and saved as a TIFF by default. The Output section is where you can select a location you want the files to be saved. Also in the Output section, you can determine default names that files will be automatically saved as. If you do not customize the naming, it defaults to crop0001+.tif. Additional scans are sequentially numbered without having to type in a file name. This could be changed to any name you want plus sequence number and file type.

I have used a few brands of scanner software drivers and applications, and this feature in VueScan is great! Batch scanning is a time saving feature incorporated into VueScan. Rather than having to process and crop each frame one by one, batch scanning allows the user to set up and scan multiple frames in a continuous process. The advantage of batch scanning becomes apparent when lots of images are being scanned. The user can let the computer work and return once the batch has been finished.

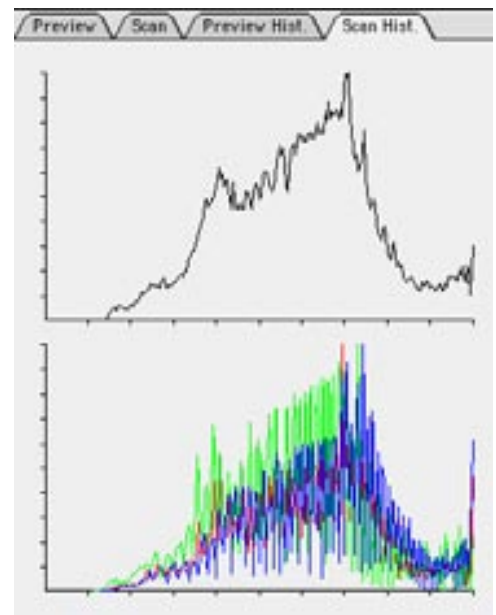
There is another great feature of VueScan—the Histogram viewer. There is a tab above the

scanned image that says Scan Histogram. This is great for determining if the exposure is correct for your scan. The Histogram is something digital photographers have had for a few years now. The Histogram is a visual guide that shows how many pixels of each intensity in the image there are and where they fall on a 0 to 255 scale. 0 is the blackest black and 255 is the whitest white. If your scan is too light or too dark you can use the Histogram as a guide to change the scan exposure to correct for this.

I am aware that some scanner software costs over \$250. When I saw that VueScan cost only \$59 for the standard edition, or \$79 for the professional edition, I thought it would be a less than fully featured software. I have to say I am impressed with the features and ease of use. I didn't read any manual before using VueScan. My only prior experience was in using the scanner software that came with my scanner. VueScan was easy to figure out and it didn't take long to learn. I really want to try the OSX version, but it shouldn't work any differently than the OS9 version.

The Professional Edition has all the features of the Standard Edition, plus: Create raw scan files, ICC profiles, Multiple color spaces, IT8 color calibration, and Unlimited free upgrades. If you have a scanner and the software doesn't do much for you I would suggest that you give VueScan a try. It can be downloaded and tried out before purchasing.

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Mac: <http://www.hamrick.com/files/vuesca80.dmg> Installs to: VueScan folder on desktop After downloading the file for your operating system install the program by double-clicking or using the appropriate un-packing program. VueScan will automatically run after installation.



Histogram scanning