

Tips and Tricks for Using Digital Cameras & Scanners

Adjust your monitor.

For Windows, go to the Display Control Panel and set the resolution to at least 800 x 600 (1024 x 768 is better). Select True Color in the Color Palette. On Macs, go to the Monitors and Sound Control Panel and select thousands or millions of colors.



Use OCR software.

To scan text, you need OCR (optical character recognition) software. Without OCR software, you will only get a picture of text which cannot be edited or copied. Some scanner software packages include OCR software, others do not.



Set the resolution to 72 ppi.

Unless you are creating materials that need a professional look when printed, use the lowest resolution possible to create small image files that will not burden programs like Overlay Maker, IntelliPics, BoardMaker or Speaking Dynamically.



Look through the LCD.

LCD (liquid crystal display) panels show exactly what the lens capture to eliminate half shots and decapitated students. LCDs enable you to review photos and delete unwanted images without connecting the camera to the computer.

Keep the glass clean and the top down.

Ink, glue, dust, fingerprints, scratches food crumbs and other messes on the glass decrease the quality of scanned images.

Glossy is good.

Glossy photos scan better than matte photos. Glossy photo paper has a clear surface and generates a clean image. Matte photo paper has thousands of small indentations that decrease clarity of scanned images.

Pack spare batteries.

Digital cameras consume batteries fast and furiously. Always carry spares when on photo snapping excursions!



Choose formats carefully!

Use TIF when scanning or crossing platforms. Most paint programs open TIF files. TIF's differ in byte order. Macs can usually (but not always) open TIF's with a PC byte order. PCs can rarely open TIFS with a MAC byte order. Use Adobe Photoshop or Graphics Converter to convert TIF's to the right byte order. Use GIF's to create images that are to be VIEWED but not PRINTED. GIF's are the format of choice for most graphics displayed on the World Wide Web. Use the JPEG format for photographs.

Let there be light.

Use a flash to shoot pictures with a digital camera. Only scan photographs with good contrast. The better the quality of the image placed on the scanner, the better the scanned image will turn out.



Use cameras with storage.

Select a camera that has small removable media cards that you can put in and take out of the camera like film to expand the number of photos you can take on community excursions.

Remember the copyright.

Most photos in books, magazines and websites are copyrighted. Avoid hassle, purchase copyright-free image books which contain graphics that can be scanned, copied and used freely.