



Perfect Page image quality.

Kodak Scanners



Click to learn more »



Home > Product Guides > Scanners > Epson Perfection 3490 Photo

ADVERTISEMENT



Epson Perfection 3490 Photo

REVIEW DATE: 10.02.05

Editor's Rating: ●●●●○

Members' Rating: ●●●●○

Discuss Total posts: 1

Buy It Here: \$69.00 - \$96.00

By M. David Stone

With digital photography becoming more and more the norm, the best justification for a flatbed designed for photo scanning is that it can scan at high enough quality to convert your old film-based photos to digital ones once and for all. The Epson Perfection 3490 Photo (\$99.99 direct) is chiefly designed for people that want to scan old photos, but it takes a reasonable stab at 35-mm slides and negatives as well. The claimed 3,200-pixel-per-inch (ppi) optical resolution is far beyond what you need for prints and easily enough for scanning 35-mm film for printing at 8-by-10 or larger.

On our tests the 3490 did a good job with prints. When we compared the scan with the original, the only difference we saw was a barely discernable loss of sharpness in the copy. In general, the quality was in the same class as that of the Canon CanoScan 8400F, our current low-end Editors' Choice.

The 3940 also did a reasonably good job resolving detail in slide scans. At 2,400 ppi, detail and sharpness were roughly equivalent to 2,400-ppi scans from the 8400F, although not a match for the more expensive Canon CanoScan 9950F, which is also a current Editors' Choice. High resolution isn't all that's needed for scanning slides, however.

Scan quality for film is highly dependent on dynamic range—the ability to see all the steps in shading across the entire range from black to white. On one of our toughest test slides, which had a dark line of trees against a bright sky, the 3490 lost more detail in the tree line than either the CanoScan 8400F or the 9950F.

The 3490 still did a credible job with film, especially on less demanding slides, but adjusting settings to get the most from each image required more work than with the Canon printers—something more than a point-and-shoot photographer would probably want to do. Fortunately, the results using the default settings for most slides should be acceptable to most casual photographers, if not serious hobbyists.

Speed is well within a reasonable range. We timed the 3940 at 29 to 33 seconds for prescanning and scanning a 4-by-6 photo at a number of resolutions. Scanning a slide at 2,400 ppi took 1 minute 8 seconds. More important than raw scan speed, however, is that both the driver and hardware design help make scanning quick and easy.

The driver offers three modes, including a fully automatic mode that can handle all settings for you and usually produce a good scan; a professional mode that lets you tweak the image by adjusting settings such as brightness, contrast, saturation, color balance, and gamma (which effectively adjusts contrast differently for different levels of brightness); and a home mode that offers a tad more control than full auto mode.

If you have older, faded photos, you'll particularly like the driver's color-restore feature, which did as good a job as we've seen of bringing an old, faded test photo back to life. The driver also offers dust removal for slides and negatives, but not for prints. The feature, which is strictly software based, did a reasonably good job of removing dust in our test slides.

Setting up a film scan is easier than with most scanners, thanks largely to a template that's almost impossible to position incorrectly. The template holds up to three slides or a strip of film. If you plan to scan a lot of negatives, however, be sure to take a look at the 3490's close cousin, the Epson Perfection 3590 Photo, which includes an automatic film feeder. Also helping to speed up scanning are scan buttons on the front panel, including options to scan to e-mail, to your printer, and to PDF format.

The scanner comes with bundled software for photo editing, OCR, and business cards. The OCR software works reasonably well, successfully reading both font-test pages in 8-point Times New Roman and Arial without a mistake, but the usefulness is limited by the lack of an automatic document feeder. The business-card software is hardly worth installing, with three or more errors in nine of the ten business cards we scanned. That makes the package only marginally useful for business-oriented applications. But if you want to scan photographic prints and—to a lesser extent—film, the Epson Perfection 3940 Photo can not only do the job, but do it at a surprisingly low price.

Compare the scanners mentioned above side by side.

Sub-ratings:
Value: ●●●●○
Usability: ●●●●○
Photos: ●●●●○
Slides: ●●●●○
Film: ●●●●○
OCR: ●●●●○
Business cards: ●●●●○

table of contents
Cheap Flatbed Scanners
• Introduction
• Canon CanoScan LIDE 60 (summary)
• Canon CanoScan LIDE 25
• Epson Perfection 3490 Photo
At A Glance
Full Review

Share This

- Digg this
- Post to del.icio.us
- Post to Slashdot

top sellers

- Compare Store Deals
- Hewlett Packard Scanjet 4890 Film Scanner (35 mm), Flatbed Scanner
 - Canon DR-2580C Pass-Through Scanner
 - Canon CanoScan 8400F Flatbed Scanner
 - Planon System Solutions DocuPen R700 Handheld Scanner
 - Epson Perfection@ 4490 PHOTO Flatbed Scanner
- more >



PRODUCT GUIDES

- Desktops
- Digital Cameras
- DVD Creation
- Handhelds
- Laptops
- LCDs
- MP3 Players
- PDAs & Phones
- Printers
- VoIP
- Windows XP
- Wireless Networks
- All categories

shop now

Find great products and great deals.

Shop for:

[input]

(enter product name or keywords)

in:

All Categories

news

- FU Gadget Makers Fear New Tax Hurts Sales
- Target Warns Movie Studios About Downloaded DVDs
- TrueMe Gives Passwords the Finger
- MySpace Founder's Lawsuit Is Dismissed
- Is Google Getting Serious About Video?

View All >

columns

- OpenApple: Apple Targets Cell Phone, Living Room
- The MPAA Surrenders in War Against Piracy
- A UWB-Enabled iPod: Too Cool For School?
- Dealing with Telephone Issues



PCMag.com Network Scanner Zone
Achieve maximum image quality with kodak. Visit the Scanner Zone now!

PARTNER SPOTLIGHT

The new HP BladeSystem c-Class—an infrastructure that manages the day-to-day, so you can focus on the big picture.

Search 85,000+ high quality tech jobs at Dice.com

Free Download: the Number One Automatic Defragmenter™

Is your phone smart? Visit Smart Device Central today!

RELATED ADS

- Photo Scanning
- Film Scan
- 35MM Film Scanning
- Canon Film Scanner
- Epson Scanner



- FREE Network Vulnerability Test
- Software License control, Windows XP/2000 Upgrades
- Want to know your CIS security score?
- Accelerate Web apps 15x with Citrix NetScaler

[CLICK HERE](#)
to list your WhitePapers



Storage Devices [XML](#)

[CD Burners](#), [Hard Drives](#), [DVD Burners](#), [Flash Drives](#)

Small Business Center

[Small Business Laptops](#), [Small Business Desktops](#), [Smart Phones](#), [Inkjet Printers](#), [Wireless Networking](#), [Business Accounting Software](#)

ExtremeTech [XML](#)

[Top Deep Tech Stories](#), [CPUs, Boards & Components](#), [3D Graphics](#), [Audio & HDTV](#), [Build It](#), [OS](#), [Software & Networking](#)

Wireless Networking [XML](#)

[Wireless Routers](#), [Wireless Access Netgear](#), [Linksys Routers](#)

GearLog: Cool Gadgets—!

[Digital Cameras](#), [Digital Video](#), [Gizmos](#), [MP3 Players](#), [Desktops](#), [Wearable Tech](#), [Cheap Geek](#)

TechnoRide

[Car Technology](#), [Car Video System Audio](#), [Auto News](#), [GPS Car Navigation](#), [Reviews](#), [Hybrid Cars](#), [Concept Cars](#), [Car Auto Shows](#)

[View all PCMag.com RSS Feeds >](#)

PCMAG.COM

[Issue Index](#) | [Contact Us](#) | [About](#) | [Advertise](#) | [Site Map](#) | [Magazine Customer Service](#)

PCMAG.COM QUICK LINKS

[Cheap Laptops](#) | [Wireless Networking](#) | [Media Desktops](#) | [Laser Printers](#) | [InkJet Printers](#) | [MP3 Players](#) | [Digital Camcorders](#) | [Plasma HDTVs](#) | [LCD Monitors](#) | [Flatbed Scanners](#) | [Bluetooth Phones](#) | [Palm PDAs](#) | [Cheap Digital Cameras](#) | [Virus Software](#) | [Small Business Solutions](#)

ZIFF DAVIS MEDIA

[Ziff Davis Home](#) | [Contact Us](#) | [Advertise](#) | [Link to Us](#) | [Reprints](#) | [Magazine Subscriptions](#) | [Newsletters](#) | [RSS Feeds](#) | [Tech Shop](#) | [White Papers](#) | [Tech Encyclopedia](#) | [PC Downloads](#) | [ROI Calculators](#) | [Tech Jobs](#) | [Enterprise Product Comparison Guides](#) | [Tech Webcasts](#) | [Tech Podcasts](#) | [Tech Video](#)

[1UP](#) | [Baseline](#) | [The Channel Insider](#) | [CIO Insight](#) | [Cranky Geeks](#) | [DesktopLinux](#) | [DeviceForge](#) | [DevSource](#) | [DigitalLife](#) | [DLTV](#) | [eSeminars](#) | [eWEEK](#) | [ExtremeTech](#) | [Filefront](#) | [GameVideos](#) | [GearLog](#) | [LinuxDevices](#) | [Linux Watch](#) | [Microsoft Watch](#) | [PC Magazine](#) | [PCMagCasts](#) | [PDF Zone](#) | [Publish](#) | [Security IT Hub](#) | [Server IQ](#) | [Smart Company](#) | [Smart Device Central](#) | [TechnoRide](#) | [Web Buyer's Guide](#) | [What's New Now](#) | [Windows for Devices](#) | [Ziff Davis Media International](#)

Use of this site is governed by our [Terms of Use](#) and [Privacy Policy](#)
Copyright © 1996-2006 [Ziff Davis Publishing Holdings Inc.](#) All Rights Reserved. PC Magazine is a registered trademark of Ziff Davis Publishing Holdings Inc. Reproduction in whole or in part in any form or medium without express written permission of Ziff Davis Media Inc. is prohibited.