

ImageDECK Portable Scanner

MICROTEK

Remember the mid-1980's when Compaq Computer introduced the shleppable portable computer? Weighing about 30 pounds and encased in a pedestrian rectangular box, the "Compaq" enabled PC-computing to be ported hither and yon. Remember the Compaq "lunch box" portable that weighed a mere 20 pounds or so that was introduced a couple of years later? Having access to a 20-pound box was much more palatable, i.e., portable, than a 30-pound box. Of course, progressing through the "laptop" generation, weighing 15 pounds or less, with the advent of Y2K, portable computers are now called "notebooks" and "palmtops" weighing as little as 4 pounds and a few ounces, respectively.

MICROTEK has delivered the first portable, stand-alone laptop scanner. Weighing a mere 15 pounds, the ImageDECK is sized akin to a modest suitcase: 13" wide, 4.8" high, and 18.9" long. While, unfortunately, not having a handle or other handy manner in which to carry it, the ImageDECK nevertheless is easily rolled from place to place similar to conventional catalog cases and cardboard boxes fraught with vital discovery materials.

The ImageDECK is not concerned with being socially-correct: it is designed to function independently of a computer — portable or otherwise. Basically, the ImageDECK may be operate in virtually any environment, e.g., basement, attic, off-site storage, sports event, etc., so long as a source of power is available. A conventional AC power source providing from 100V to 240V is required; power consumption is 26W. Once plugged into a power supply, the Image Deck is ready to scan. No installation whatsoever is prerequisite to operation.

Scan modes are adequate for most law practice applications. Optical resolution is 600 x 600 dpi with a maximum scan size being paper sized 8.5" x 11.7". Thus, a limitation is that only letter and A4 sized paper (or smaller) are accommodated, not legal size paper. Images that are the order of magnitude of a routine postage stamp may be enlarged for legibility. For scanning color images, 36-bit color (12 bits per RGB color) is afforded with approximately 68.7 billion colors. For scanning black-and-white images, 12-bit Grayscale is afforded with 4,096 shades of gray and 1-bit black & white with 64 halftone shades simulated. Output file formats are conventional: JPEG for color and grayscale, and PCX for black and white. Images may be generated with low, medium, and high compression, i.e., with a compression factor of from 1 to 100.

Scanning ala the ImageDECK is conducted by simply pressing buttons on an innocuous, sensibly- organized front-panel. The green Start button is situated at the extreme left. Immediately to the right of the Start button is the red Stop/Clear button. Next, is the functionally-crucial Mode button that indicates whether scanning or copying is appropriate. For scanning, there are three buttons specifying whether vanilla black-and-white or Grayscale or color images should be generated. Next, is the Compression button indicating whether the output image should be generated with low, medium, or high compression. Within one of these three compression ranges, an elongated 2-button control is provided with a "-" on the left side for gradually reducing the compression and a "+" on the right side for gradually increasing the compression. Similarly, there is also a Resolution button indicating whether the output image should be generated with low, medium, or high resolution. Within one of these three resolution ranges, the same elongated 2-button control is used (by continuously pressing the "-" for reducing the resolution or the "+" for increasing the resolution) to obtain the appropriate resolution. A LCD display indicates media-related error conditions that arise during scanning.

Scanned images are routinely output to removable disks or to a printer. The ImageDECK contains two built-in disk drives, one for receiving a 1.44MB 3½" floppy disk and the other for receiving an Iomega 100MB Zip disk. A side panel is provided for attaching a printer or other media such as portable hard drives. MICROTEK has packaged the ImageDECK with a collection of easy-to-use image processing software: Ulead PhotoImpact for image-editing; Caere OmniPage (Limited Edition) for optical character recognition (OCR); and Caere PageKeeper for document management and storage. Thus, considerable editing may be achieved even before returning to normal computer operations. Not unlike the Internet, the ImageDECK has redefined the physical boundaries of text and image scanning; the only limitations to conducting scanning or copying operations are an adequate power source and suitable output media — the ImageDECK does the rest.