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Canon CanoScan LiDE 600F scanner

Is this the scanner to transfer your photos to your PC?

by Doug Harman published on 12 April 2007

Canon's latest Contact Image Sensor LiDE scanner is the 600F, which updates the preceding model, the 500F. It brings to the LiDE range 48-bit colour and 4800 x 9600ppi scanning for the first time and so offers a tempting set of features for those in the game for a budget scanner with plenty of scanning oomph.

For a start there's improved colour reproduction and accuracy and the high-resolution scans this is capable of means, you can make decent enlargements or crops from your (up to A4) originals.

Powered by USB2 saving you a plug under your desk, the design, while pleasing to the eye is also pretty functional too, a double-hinged lid means it can be used in three positions: flat on the desk, open 180-degrees or upright using a built-in stand.

A plus for those with shoe boxes stuffed to the gunnels with negatives is the 600F comes with a separate 35mm slide/negative Film Adapter Unit (FAU) scanning attachment that can take up to six unmounted frames at a time.

Disappointingly, mounted 35mm frames cannot be used and the FAU must be attached to the flatbed to work. It has its own, hinged lid and is rather bulky and awkward to use, it's hard to accurately position the negatives or slides. It also needs an extra connection to the scanner so the 600F becomes not the most elegant of devices once the FAU is sat in place.

There are seven "EZ" buttons on the scanner: four are for scanning chores while the others deal with scanning to email, copying (printing) or scanning to a folder on your hard disc for example, which makes using the 600F very easy and quite intuitive to use.



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Helping this along is a fine suite of software that comes bundled with the scanner. You get ScanSoft's OmniPage SE optical character recognition application to convert scans of text originals into an editable document, ArcSoft PhotoStudio a basic image editing package that'll help tweak your scanned photos and NewSoft Preto! PageManager for converting scans into PDF documents.

Canon's updated Toolbox software allows customisation of the "EZ" buttons to functions of your choice and allows the straightening of slanted scans, auto document correction and levels of JPEG compression and adjustment. Meanwhile the latest updated ScanGear package is included and allows control (in simple or advanced modes) of brightness, colour and contrast of the scans you make.

Scan quality is very good (particularly at this level) and scanning speed is also very fast but of course depends on the resolution and amount of additional processing involved with Canon's FARE technology for example.

FARE (in this case it is FARE Level 3) or Film Automatic Retouching and Enhancement is included in the 600F and can be applied to your film scans. It helps to remove dust and scratches from a scan - on the fly - using additional infra-red scanning to help recognise non-image forming elements on a picture's surface (scratches and dust). It can also help restore faded colours and improve the appearance of grain in scans; great for those enlargements of slides you might want to make for example.

FARE can even help adjust for backlit scans where a subject may appear in shadow or underexposed as a result. The FARE technology can brighten just the elements in a scene needed to make them appear properly exposed. So all very clever and very cool.

VERDICT

Canon's CanoScan LiDE 600F provides what is

At a glance

What is it?

Slim line, A4, flatbed scanner

Good

Design, price, scan quality, FARE, software

Bad

Bulky and awkward to use FAU attachment, mounted 35mm slides not supported by FAU

Verdict

It's stylishly slim contours and pleasing to look at and it's not a bad performer either

Price £129

Our score

8/10

Your score

?/10

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essentially a big scanner set of features in a small scanner (except when the FAU is attached!) and at a remarkably small price too.

It works well, is fast and provides good quality scans from an easy to use set of software and "EZ" buttons. The bulky FAU is a bit incongruous but overall, this is a great machine at a great price.