

## Canon CanoScan 4400F scanner

Does Canon's latest scanner perform?

by Doug Harman published on 9 May 2007

The 4400F comes packed with easy to use features and plenty of scanning kit to help make the job easier and faster. The silver, grey and black livery looks nice and the swooping curves across the "advanced" Z-lid that also features the built in FAU give the device a very modern look.

The Z-lid is designed to accept thicker items for scanning on the A4 flatbed, such as books yet retain a good light seal around the original to maintain the scan quality. The Z-lid works well. The FAU is problematic however, since the thin and rather flimsy attachment that houses either six unmounted slides or negatives or four mounted slides clicks into place, literally, under the hood.

This is a tad clumsy to execute without getting finger marks all over your slides or negs and, as I found, means the FAU adapter is too thin to accept slides that are mounted under glass, which is a real problem. Glass mounted slides are much thicker than "normal" mounts, so if you buy this scanner to help scan such originals, the lack of any warnings about this limitation (anywhere that I can find on the supplied documentation) could be a major hiccup.

Those niggles aside, the 4400F does provide you with 4800 x 9600ppi optical resolution with up to 48-bit colour depth while the its "super fast" scan "engine" works very well indeed. However, there's a caveat. Yes, you do get scan previews within Canon's claimed five-second timing, but only after you've waited 20-seconds for the lamp to adjust!

USB2 connectivity ensure the massive file sizes it is possible to create can be fed to your connect Mac or Windows PC and a fair clip, but using my G5 iMac with a 2.1GHz PowerPC processor, four 100% scans of mounted slides took just over 20 -minutes at 4800ppi and with QARE applied.



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The QARE works well enough, but the colour restoration side of things is left wanting, with some of faded test slides left almost untouched at the low and medium settings and only really effective changes and colour reintroduced at the high setting.

However, once you have it set to match your image requirements (it may change with every image you scan), QARE works well.

The scanner proper has seven "EZ" buttons that one-touch operation of various features and common scanning tasks such as scan to email, PDF file creation, copying and PDF scanning in colour or mono. These are very useful and some can be customised to suit your workflow, which is also a nice touch.

A multi-photo scan mode works well allowing the scanning of up to 10 originals (film or reflective documents or photos), will automatically crop and straighten them for you on the fly and then allow you to work on them separately post scanning. This is a fast and nice to use feature ideal for when you want to get a group of scans ready quickly.

Included software is very comprehensive (as is commendably usual for Canon scanning kit) and includes ArcSoft PhotoStudio basic image editing software, OmniPage SE OCR software, and Presto!PageManager to help organise and manage your scanned documents.

Canon's ScanGear and CanoScan Toolbox have both been upgraded with improved algorithms to improve final scan quality and with beefed up functionality. However, despite the improvements, scanning colour slides using the Toolbox alone (rather than through, say, Photoshop TWAIN) colour slides were treated as negatives (or reversed by the software!) and there is no way to stop this from happening without opening the scanner's main driver control window and tweaking the film type there, which unhappily

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## At a glance

### What is it?

A4 flatbed scanner with 4800 x 9600ppi resolution

### Good

Design, price, scan quality, QARE, bundled software

### Bad

Flimsy and awkward to use FAU attachment, glass mounted 35mm slides not usable in FAU

### Verdict

The CanoScan 4400F is a versatile and simple to use flatbed scanner and certainly worth a closer look

**Price** £79

**Our score**

**8/10**

**Your score**

**?/10**

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slows things down again.

In terms of scan quality, the 48-bit colour depth looks nice to have but you have to remember that any 48-bit scan is downsampled as soon as you try saving it as JPEG or even printing it for example. And there are limited applications that can handle 48-bit colour with only professional packages such as Photoshop able to offer a modicum of control. But, the increased colour depth does give you more colour to play with prior to saving and means you're able to fine tune scans in editing software, with the caveat that you'll lose that colour information later!

Detail and optical density is good, the 4400F has a DMax of 3.3 (DMax is a measure of the lightest to darkest areas) and as most slide film reaches a DMax of 3.5 (with only Fuji's Velvia exceeding this and reaching a DMax 4.0) it can cope with most types of film and exposure levels. And so it proves on my scans, which are deep and punchy without losing the highlights and retaining detail in the darkest areas quite well.

## **VERDICT**

The Canon CanoScan 4400F may have a few foibles but it can produce excellent scans and is very easy to use (barring that frustrating FAU adapter/holder) thanks in part to the EZ buttons. QARE and the nice software interface in either Canon's Toolbox or when using the scanner through a TWAIN compliant package such as Photoshop.

But the decisive factor for me comes when you get a look at the price, £79 including VAT. This makes it excellent value for money as well and a scanner worthy of real consideration. If you need a good flatbed scanner that has film scanning capability then the CanoScan 4400F should be high on your list.