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Review: Review: Canon ScanFront 220P Network Scanner

By Bryan Sims

Canon ScanFront 220P

www.canonscanningsuccess.com

TechnoScore: 5.0

1 = Lowest Possible Score; 5 = Highest Possible Score

INTRODUCTION

I recently had the opportunity to evaluate the Canon ScanFront 220P, a standalone network scanner. For some time now, I have wanted to try a network scanner. Because I use a laptop as my primary machine, I like to have as many devices as possible connected directly to the network rather than to my computer. To do otherwise cuts down on the mobility of the laptop. Thus, a network scanner perfectly complements my setup. The ScanFront 220P did not disappoint.

Canon makes [two ScanFront 220 scanners](#). Their specs appear to be the same except that the 220P (which I tried) includes a fingerprint scanner for authentication.

The scanner does not appear to be available directly from Canon's Web site. However, one online retailer I found sells the 220P for \$1,767.07 and the 220 for \$1,611.97.

FEATURES

Direct control of the scanner comes by way of a large touch screen that enables you to access all of the scanner's functions. Additionally, the scanner includes traditional keyboard and mouse connections, as well as two USB ports.

I no longer have a keyboard or mouse with traditional connectors. However, when I plugged in a USB keyboard and mouse, I had immediate control over the scanner. This is useful if you decide to require people to log in to use the scanner.

Additionally, you can access the scanner through a Web interface. This enables you to easily identify shared folders, create jobs, and manage other settings.

If you wish, you can set the scanner up to require users to enter a password to access the scanner. With the 220P, you can bypass the password and use the fingerprint scanner. Similarly, you can have the scanner record a log of all activity. Conversely, you can set it up so that the functions are readily available and the user need not enter any information to access the features.

A network scanner perfectly complements my setup. The ScanFront 220P did not disappoint.

You can scan your documents to a network folder, to an FTP location, direct to a USB drive, or send them via email. The ability to scan to a USB drive is a nice feature in that it enables you to use the scanner even if it is disconnected from the network.

The scanner is a full color duplex scanner. It is rated at 26 pages per minute, and scans to TIFF, JPEG, and PDF formats at up to 600 dpi.

Even with the feed trays unfolded, the scanner is amazingly compact, especially considering the large touch screen.

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USING THE SCANFRONT 220P

I loved this machine. It is easy to use and gives you multiple options on how to do things. For example, you can access the unit by using the touch screen, or you can add a keyboard and mouse, or you can access certain functions over the Web interface. Best of all, the scanner does not require you to perform a particular task in a particular manner. Instead, it enables you to configure the scanner in the way that makes the most sense for you.

For example, you can create jobs that will automatically scan in a certain manner. To test it, I created a job that scanned simplex, in black and white, and delivered the file as a PDF to a shared folder. I also created a job to scan duplex and output the file as an OCR'd PDF. I can choose either of these jobs simply by pressing the button on the touch screen in the job menu. I was also able to assign different colors to the job buttons to make them more easily identifiable. Given the variety of settings, the job buttons are practically infinitely customizable.

The ScanFront has great features, is easily configured, enables you to work in the most efficient way possible, and does a good job of scanning.

In addition to the job buttons, you can also completely bypass them and manually set the various settings when you scan. Again, this is a good example of how you can operate the device in the manner that works best for you.

As part of my test, I decided to scan several of my personal real estate files. In doing this, I was impressed by a couple of things.

First, it scanned documents at a quick rate. I didn't time it to see if it was actually 25 pages per minute. However, it seemed sufficiently quick. It slowed down a little when I scanned a few pages in duplex at 600 dpi (just to see what would happen). However, I don't think many people will scan at this setting.

Second, it handled, without problem, pages that had been stapled. In our office, we have a digital copier that includes scanning capabilities. One of the drawbacks of the ADF on that scanner is that it will often jam when scanning pages that had been stapled. I was quite pleased to see that I encountered no problems when scanning the previously stapled pages.

CONS AND WISH LIST

It was during this test, however, that I discovered one of two minor issues that bugged me about this scanner. The first issue is that after I scan a document, the touch screen returns to the home page. This means I have to select the Job Button to return to the job screen and then select the job that I want. I would like to have the option of returning to the job screen rather than the home screen, which would make it more convenient when scanning large numbers of documents.

The second minor quibble that I had with the machine is that the login screen of the Web interface does not work with Firefox. I had to open the page in Internet Explorer to access it. This isn't a huge deal, but I have to wonder why no one bothered to test and fix this issue.

Despite the fact that the scanner is very customizable, I do wish that there were more options for naming conventions. The automatic naming convention now names files with a time and date stamp. For example, a file might be named 20080610225007383.pdf. This would reveal that the file was scanned on June 10, 2008 at 10:50:07383 pm. The main problem with this scheme is that if you scan several documents on the same day, the differing digit falls late in the file name.

In a future version of the machine, or perhaps a firmware update for this model, I would like to see a customizable naming scheme that would make it easier to identify files. A simple solution might simply be to put an underscore between the last digit of the day and the first digit of the time.

FINGERPRINT READER

The model that I evaluated had the fingerprint reader. But is this necessary?

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Based upon my tests, I would want this if I were going to require users to log in to use the scanner. Thus, if tracking the use of the scanner was important to you, having the ability to login without having to type a password (whether on a keyboard or the touch screen) is very nice. Similarly, when you set up the scanner you can configure the job settings so that certain users have access to only certain jobs.

If these are important considerations for you, I would suggest going with the 220P. If these are not important to you, you may want to save the few dollars and opt to forego the fingerprint authentication.

CONCLUSION

The ScanFront has great features, is easily configured, enables you to work in the most efficient way possible, and does a good job of scanning. I believe that this scanner would be an excellent solution for anyone seeking to add a standalone network scanner to their office. This is true whether you work in a large office and add it for a specific workgroup, or if you work in a small office and add it for the entire firm.

If I were in the market for a network scanner, I would not hesitate to purchase the Canon ScanFront 200P. In fact, I am now trying to justify purchasing one for my home because I don't want to send my review model back.

The ScanFront 220P is not a perfect machine. However, I encountered no problems when using it and it did what it was supposed to do. I like machines that do one thing and do it well. It has been a long time since I encountered a device that meets this criteria as well as the ScanFront 220P does.

On balance, I give the Canon ScanFront 220P a TechnoScore of 5 out of 5.

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CANON'S RESPONSE

We invited Canon to respond to this TechnoFeature. Andy Ikeda responded as follows:

Bryan, thank you for taking the time to review Canon's ScanFront 220P. We are happy that you are so pleased with the product. The quality of our scanners is due, not only to the diligence of our engineers, but also because we take the requests and feedback provided by our resellers and customers very seriously.

Although the default on the ScanFront is to return to the Home Page after you scan a document, it is possible to configure the system to return to the Job Screen instead. Details for setting up this configuration can be found in the Operator's Manual. Regarding Firefox, we will be happy to have our engineers address this. The naming configuration is currently being addressed and we expect to have an upgrade by Q1 '09 that will allow for customization.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Bryan Sims is a Partner at Thompson, Rosenthal & Watts, LLP., where he concentrates his practice in the areas of commercial litigation and civil appeals. Before entering private practice, Bryan worked as a law clerk for Illinois Supreme Court Justice S. Louis Rathje. Bryan is a Cum Laude graduate of Wheeling Jesuit University and a Magna Cum Laude graduate of Loyola University Chicago School of Law. Bryan has spoken on legal technology issues for both the Illinois State Bar Association and the Chicago Bar Association. He was named the 2005 TechnoLawyer of the year. Bryan blogs at www.theconnectedlawyer.com.

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