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# Preface

Dear Reader,

First, I would like to say thank you for giving me your trust by purchasing this book! I owe and dedicate *The VueScan Bible* to my readers. It was your feedback that convinced me to write another book about scanning. After publishing my successful book, *Scanning Negatives and Slides*, that describes all scanning processes in detail, I received loads of letters via my website, [www.scanguru.info](http://www.scanguru.info). Along with giving me useful feedback, readers frequently demanded even more software-specific guidance—and VueScan was at the forefront of those readers' interests.

So, here we go! *The VueScan Bible* is designed to help both beginners and experienced users get the most out of their VueScan-powered scanners. While it includes all the basic scanning know-how you need, VueScan-specific workflows are the center of attention. Scanning is not rocket science, but you simply have to know certain things; otherwise, you will waste a lot of time and effort. This is especially true when you use software as powerful as VueScan. Despite its rich features, VueScan is a remarkably lean scanning program that has been continually improved by its inventor, Ed Hamrick, for more than a decade. I want to express my gratitude to Ed Hamrick, who has been supporting this book project from the very beginning.

VueScan was the first scanning software ever to provide sophisticated features, like RAW data scanning functionality, that live up to their promise. And it runs on Mac, Windows and Linux computers alike. Whether you are a techie-loving pixel peeper or just an average user who wants to work quickly and efficiently with the software—you must get used to VueScan's tricks and traps for the best scanning results. This book provides you with everything you need to know to convert your analog negatives, slides, documents, and photo prints into high-quality digital files.

Best Regards

Sascha Steinhoff  
Bangkok, April 2011

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# VueScan – Look and feel

# 1

VueScan is possibly the most feature-rich application available on the market today. It allows you to control nearly all current scanner models plus a good portion of vintage models. When you compare the program to the scanner drivers shipped with scanning hardware, you will find that VueScan is much more powerful. Of course, this power comes at a price. Though it has a beginners' mode, the sheer number of options in VueScan can make it cumbersome if you are not familiar with its operation. But as this chapter will show, you can easily handle VueScan once you are familiar with the concepts.

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- Saving and restoring options

## 1.1 Field of application

VueScan is a third-party scan application developed by Ed Hamrick. Although every scanner comes with a scanner driver provided by the manufacturer, you can noticeably expand your scanner's abilities by using VueScan. VueScan is a commercial yet economically priced application. It supports 1,600 different scanners at the time of writing this book and new scanners are added frequently, therefore the numbers are still rising. The application supports almost all flatbed and film scanners available on the market today, and a good portion of vintage scanners as well. So if you are using any common desktop scanner, the chances are high that VueScan will work with it.

### CMOS scanners

Of course, there are a few exceptions to the rule. At present, VueScan does not support CMOS scanners. CMOS scanners are small, box-shaped devices that have a CMOS chip inside to convert analog slides into digital pictures. Despite their comparably poor quality, they sell quite well—mostly because of their low price. For quality-conscious users, they are not a reasonable choice; though they have been around for some years, they still lag far behind traditional flatbed and film scanners. Basically these are just cheap digital cameras in a box.

### Drum scanners and Hasselblad scanners

The other scanners not supported by VueScan are vintage drum scanners and their modern successors manufactured by Hasselblad. Drum scanners are the dinosaurs of scanning. During their heyday in the 1990s, they were incredibly heavy, incredibly expensive, and very difficult to operate. A specially trained scan operator had to run these monster scanners, which could easily cost as much as a house. Drum scanners still exist in small numbers, but they are slowly dying out. If you still want to use one, either talk to the manufacturer regarding scanning software or try your luck with SilverFast. SilverFast provides support for some of these high-end scanners, but the software is quite pricey.

The modern alternative to a drum scanner is manufactured by a company originally called Imacon. Imacon was bought out by Hasselblad, so the scanners are now sold as Hasselblad devices. Hasselblad scanners operate with a kind of virtual drum, so they look quite different from average film and flatbed scanners. Neither VueScan nor SilverFast provide scanning software for Hasselblad scanners. For the average user, these scanners are not an option. Although Hasselblad scanners are cheaper than the old drum scanners, they still can cost as much as a car. For average desktop scanning, film and flatbed scanners are the first choice—and the chance that VueScan supports your desktop scanner is almost 100%. The manufacturer's website, [www.hamrick.com](http://www.hamrick.com), hosts a compatibility list where you can see all supported scanner models.



Image: Nikon

Classic film scanners like this Nikon Coolscan 5000 deliver brilliant scans of 35mm film. VueScan supports almost every film scanner on the market.



Image: Canon

Flatbed scanners are the most versatile desktop scanners. They can process transparencies and reflectives of various sizes. VueScan supports almost every flatbed scanner on the market.



Image: Reflecta

CMOS scanners are relatively new on the market. Most of these devices are quite cheap and not capable of scanning analog originals in good quality. Not supported by VueScan, yet.



Image: Hasselblad

Hasselblad scanners are the Ferraris of the scanning world. They cost as much as a car and, despite the high price, functionality like infrared channel is missing. Not supported by VueScan, yet.

## 1.2 Compatibility and license issues

There is no other scanning software available on the market that support a similar range of operating systems as VueScan. The support of Windows systems is more or less standard. VueScan supports all current versions of Windows, as well as all versions of Windows since Windows 2000. Mac OS X is supported by VueScan, too - from version 10.3.9 to the latest version. Mac OS 9 is not supported any more. At this point all other scanning software manufacturers usually stop. You can be happy if they provide compatibility with Windows and Mac OS X, and that's it. VueScan, goes one step further, as you can use it with Linux, too! This is a very nice feature and can be quite convenient, especially if you want to reuse an existing computer as a scan machine and you have no Windows license for it. All in all the support of different operating systems by VueScan is quite unique in the world of scanning. The user can freely decide what platform he wants for his scanning computer and that is a very nice feature, indeed.\*

\* Unlike other software, VueScan provides the same functionality on every platform! **Infrared clean** will always work the same, no matter if you are using VueScan with Linux, Windows, or a Mac. With SilverFast, it can be different due to license restrictions of proprietary correction filters like Digital ICE. While Windows versions of SilverFast may support Digital ICE, it may not be the case when you are using SilverFast on a Mac. You have to check this carefully for your individual scanner and your operating system.

Unlike older scanning programs, VueScan is also available in 32-bit and 64-bit versions (the x32 and x64 versions). These are available for Windows, Mac OS X and Linux operating systems. In addition, the Mac OS X versions of VueScan are universal binaries. The Mac OS X x32 version is a universal binary with 32-bit Intel and PowerPC binaries, and the Mac OS X x64 version is a universal binary with 32-bit Intel and 64-bit Intel binaries. The x32 version of VueScan will run on both 32-bit and 64-bit Windows, Mac OS X, and Linux. The x64 version will only run on x64 Windows, Mac OS X 10.5 and later, and 64-bit Linux of course.

### Flexible licensing regulations

The licensing scheme of VueScan is as flexible as its operating system support. When you buy one license, you can use it on any kind of computer—Windows, Mac OS X, or Linux. You can even switch among operating systems while running the software, if you like. Also, in contrast to SilverFast, the license is not dedicated to a specific scanner type. If you buy any VueScan license, you can use it with any scanner supported by the software. If you buy a new scanner, you would have to buy a new SilverFast license; with VueScan, this is not necessary, since you can use VueScan with as many scanners as you like.

In most cases, you would buy a single-user license from VueScan. You can use this in two ways with your VueScan license. For one user or family, you can install VueScan on four different computers in the same home. This is extremely convenient, especially if you are using different scanners at the same time at different workstations. But if you have multiple users outside your family configuration, you should only install VueScan on one computer at the same time. For workgroups or corporate use, Hamrick Software offers multi-user licenses that are much cheaper than buying several single-user licenses.

## Standard vs. Professional Edition

Due to the flexibility of VueScan's licensing regulations, there is only one major decision that you have to make before purchasing: do you want the Standard or Professional Edition? The Standard Edition costs \$39.95, and the Professional Edition costs \$79.95—about twice as much. The Professional Edition offers some nice features that you will not find in the Standard Edition. None of them is a must—you can do proper scanning with the Standard version, too—but the extra features can be quite useful.

The first of these Professional Edition exclusive features is the ability to create raw scan files, which can be extremely helpful during batch scanning. When you use this feature, you can concentrate on the scan itself and do all your configurations later when processing the raw file. With the Standard Edition of VueScan, you have to decide before scanning whether you want to use Infrared Clean or not. If you change your mind and decide you want to fine tune an image further, you would have to rescan it. But if you have a raw scan file, all you have to do is simply change the settings—there's no need to do a time-consuming rescan.

The second feature exclusive to the Professional Edition is the embedding of ICC profiles. With IT8 color calibration, the third Professional feature, you can even create your own profiles. These features are quite convenient, as they help you produce true colors throughout the workflow. Whether you really need them or not depends on what you are scanning—e.g., for slides, IT8 color calibration is useful, while for negatives it is not. In addition, the ability to embed color profiles and do color calibration will help improve picture quality only if you have a good scanner; if you have a cheap scanner, these options are more or less a waste of time. A poor quality scanner will produce mismatched colors whether you calibrate it or not.

The fourth and potentially most important feature of the Professional Edition is an unlimited upgrade period. Ed Hamrick actively improves VueScan. Every two weeks or so, a new version is available for download. Most modifications are improved hardware support and bug fixes, but from time to time new features and GUI improvements are available. Thus, it makes sense to update your VueScan installation from time to time. With VueScan Professional, you can upgrade as many times as you like. With the Standard Edition, you can upgrade for only one year, and then you have to buy a new license. Thus, it doesn't take long for the higher price of the Professional Edition to pay off.

### Try before you buy

Before you purchase VueScan, you should check out the free trial version. It offers the full functionality of VueScan with only one restriction: the scanned pictures will bear a watermark. If you buy a license, you can unlock the installation at any time—there's no need to reinstall the program.\*

*\* This book refers to the Professional Edition of VueScan as this is the only edition that offers the full functionality. If you use the Standard Edition of VueScan, just skip the parts that deal with color management and raw scanning.*

*\* Especially if you are going to use exotic filmholders with your scanner, you should try out VueScan and make sure that it fully supports them. At the very least, run the software before you buy it to make sure it matches your expectations.*

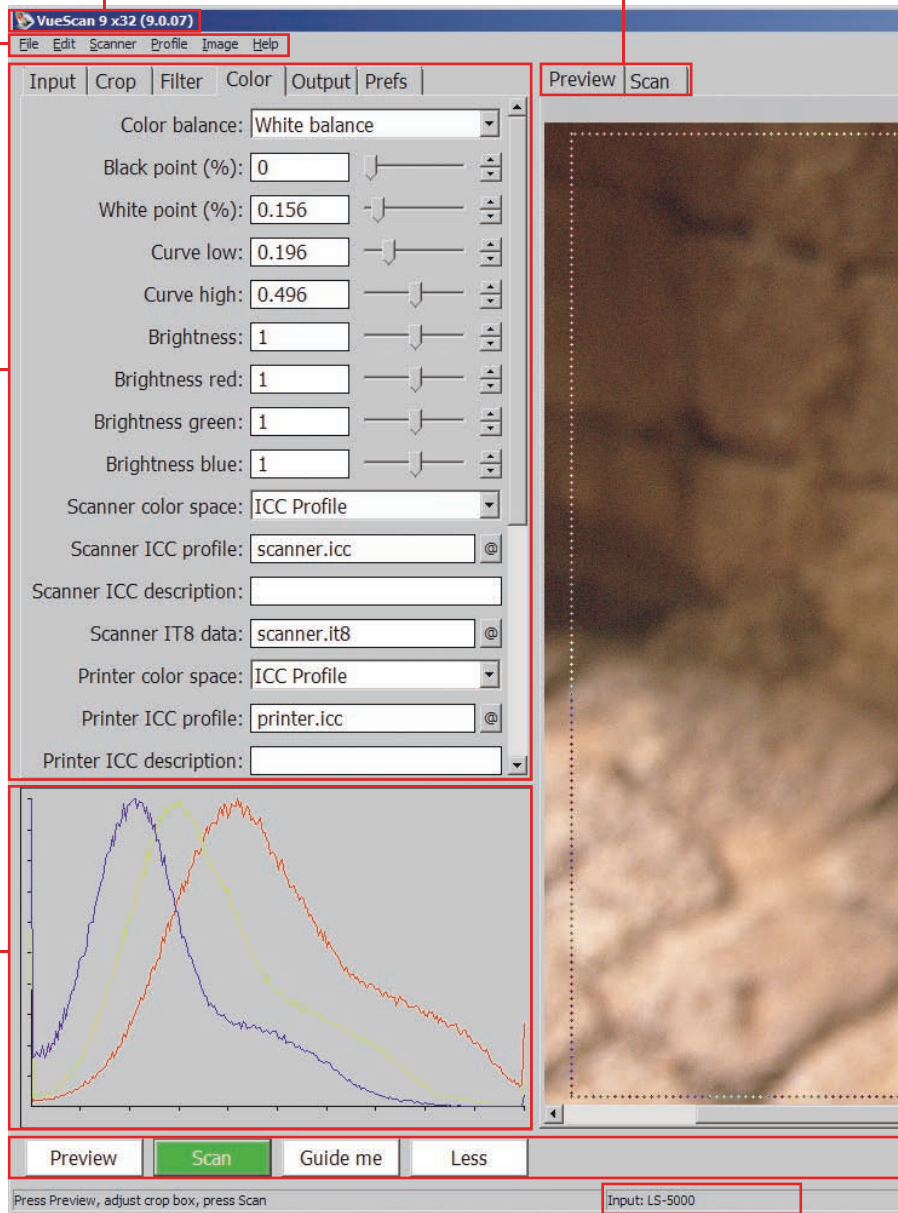
**Program Version** - Shows the current program version of Vuescan

**Preview/Scan Panel** - Here you switch between Preview and Scan forecast

**Menu Bar** - The menu bar offers some exclusive options that are not available via tab section

**Option Tabs** - This is the main control center of VueScan; here you can handle all data input, data output and processing options

**Graph display** - Here you can check the graph, curves, and image histogram of the current scan



**Input Information** - VueScan permanently displays the source of data input in the bottom line of the GUI



**Buttons** - The buttons speed up frequent tasks

**Output Information** - Absolute pixels, relative pixels, image dimensions and output file size are displayed here