

# Sights & Sounds of Multimedia

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## D28 Mobile Office Scanner

This scanner is designed to be used in a mobile environment and it would work well for that purpose. It requires a power supply and a computer to function. A salesman in a home doing a presentation would find this quite useful and easy to carry, since it is quite small and light.

The scanner comes with several pieces of software in addition to the software for the scanner itself. The installation process is uneventful, consisting of successive installation of the scanner driver and the several software programs. Only one of these programs is really necessary for the scanner to work: *DigiDoc*.

The scanner has three buttons on the right hand side, one to toggle through up to 9 LED positions, a simplex button and a duplex one. The LEDs represent scanning parameters defined in the DigiDoc program. The parameters include resolution (up to 600 dpi), paper size, business card, plastic card, color, grayscale or black and white, output type (txt, image, OCR or PDF) and location of the output.

You can use DigiDoc to program each of the 9 LED positions with variations of these parameters, so that you don't have to make changes each time you scan something different.

My first test was with a single sheet of text, to result in a file that is an editable text document. The result was as defined: the output was an RTF file with editable contents. The OCR work was perfect.

Next, I tried to scan a part of a newspaper page, defining the input as File/color/letter size with jpg output. I tore off a strip about 11" long and 6" wide from a newspaper as the input. It scanned OK and created the jpg file, but only the first five inches or so was captured.

For the third trial, I used a monthly calendar page, which has a picture, colored areas, blocks for days,

handwritten notes and headings for the month and days of the week as input and defined the output as OCR/color/letter size/text. The scan led to the OCR process and produced a document that has the picture, days of the week, the month and all the day numbers; no blocks, no colored areas, no notes. I had to install *Word* to get this result; *Wordpad* did not display the result correctly.

The scanner can scan business cards and plastic cards, so I tried these next. This test was defined as File/color/business card/jpg. The scan worked perfectly with a black and white card. I also tried three cards with color, which also scanned perfectly, including the colored design.

For the plastic card test, I used a credit card, which has raised text, colored areas, the coded number and a hologram. The scan was perfect, including the hologram!

The scanner has resolution capability from 100 to 600 dpi. I tried a text scan at 600 resolution and had it saved in TIF format. It came out very clear; no pixelation was evident until magnification of about 14 times. The file size for a single sheet of letter-size paper was about 4 MB, compared to the 120 KB for the text file of the same page.

Lastly, I tried the PDF option. I used the cover page from the Best Buy flyer and fed it through twice, front and back. The back side scanned perfectly, but the front side only included about 60% of that page.

The scanner works best with plain text pages; these scan flawlessly. The business card test and the plastic card test were perfect, also. Scanning pages with pictures worked less than perfectly: some were flawless, others were poor.

The documentation is quite extensive and is supplied in eight languages, along with limited pictorial guidance. There is one sheet for installation



and another for scanning. These are quite large and must be folded to be useful.

There are four software applications included in the package: *ABBYY Fine Reader* (OCR); *Presto! Image Folio*; *DigiDoc* (programming for the LED buttons); and *Presto! Page Manager*. Documentation for each of these is in a separate PDF document (in the Help file, in the case of *Page Manager*). The printed documentation is amplified in the *DigiDoc* PDF. There is no printed documentation for the others.

This is a very nice, compact portable scanner. It would work best with plain text documents.

**About:** D28 Mobile Office Scanner

**Manufacturer:** Plustek  
[www.plustek.com](http://www.plustek.com)

**Price:** about \$275

**Requires:** WIN 2000 Pro, XP or Vista, 550MB hard disk space, 256MB RAM.

## ***New York Times Brain Partner***

This is a set of brain games that range from very easy to very challenging. It will keep your mind busy for a long time!

There are four categories of games: Memory, Words, Logic and Numbers. Each category has from seven to nine games, giving you a total of over 32 games to exercise your brain.

The unit is about the size of a PDA, a little bigger than your typical cell phone. It requires 3 AAA batteries, one set of which is included. The screen takes up about 2/3rds of the unit's front. There is an On/Off button, although the Off button isn't really needed; the screen powers down after about 30 seconds on no activity. The unit comes with a stylus for selecting things on the screen.

When you first start up, you are asked what language you prefer; there are seven available and you can change to another at any time. The screen contrast, beep tone and backlight are changed with special buttons on the bottom of the screen.

When you choose the Logic category, you get a choice of seven games: *Tracker*, *Blocks*, *Sixteen*, *Pegs*, *Switch*, *SuDoku* and *Wordoku*. Most people have tried out *SuDoku*. *Wordoku* is similar, using letters instead of numbers. *Sixteen* involves rearranging columns and rows in order to put the array of letters in the proper order. *Pegs* involves jumping pegs until only one is left.

The Numbers category includes *Word Sums*, *Sums*, *Swimming*, *Totals*, *Calculate* and *Number*. *Calculate* and *Number* are hard, at least for me, but the others are fairly easy. *Calculate* involves using arithmetic operations and single digit numbers to come up with a defined number. *Numbers* requires entering eight of the nine single digit numbers in three sum equations to arrive at the defined sum for each.

The Words category has *Hangman*, *Anagram*, *Target*, *Word*, *Word Find*, *X-Word* and *MatchPoint*. *Hangman* and *Anagram* are games most of us are familiar with. *Target* gives you 9 letters in a 3 X 3 grid; you must select letters in the proper order to form a 9 letter word. *Word Square* is similar. *X-Word* gives you a 9 X 9 grid of letters and a list of words below; you indicate where each bottom word occurs in the grid. *MatchPoint* is hard. You are given a 9 X 9 grid with some empty squares and letters below. You indicate words made from the letters and insert them in the blanks.

Memory offers these challenges: *New Item*, *Shuffle*, *Sequence*, *Matching*, *Faces*, *Digits*, *Simon*, *Dots* and *Pairs*. *New Item* shows you several symbols, changes one and asks you to identify the one changed. *Shuffle* is similar except that the symbols are moved around after the change. *Sequence* asks you to identify which of several symbols shown one after another was which one (1st or 2nd or whatever). *Matching* is very easy – you simply identify the two symbols of a group that are the same. *Faces* asks you to check which of four faces is the one you are shown first. *Digits* is similar, but with 3- or 4-digit numbers. *Simon* blinks one symbol after another; you click on the symbols in the same order as they blinked. *Dots* shows



you a number of moving dots; you must correctly count how many dots there are. *Pairs* shows you many question marks; you click on two to find the matching pairs. It may take some time to get them all!

This is a great tool to exercise your brain. Some of the games are very easy, some challenging, some too hard for me!

**About:** *New York Times Brain Partner*

**Vendor:** Franklin Electronic Publisher  
[www.franklin.com](http://www.franklin.com)

**Price:** about \$60 direct,

## LG Xenon Cellphone

You can do all the usual things with this cell phone: call, take a picture, store contact information, record and play music and videos. It accepts a memory card to expand the memory in the phone.

It has a touch screen to simplify accessing features and has a slide-out QWERTY keyboard. Most functions can be accessed with the touch screen, but some are done more easily with the keyboard.

Calls can be interrupted to take another and 3-way calling is supported. Call forwarding is also available.

It has Bluetooth capability, as do most phones today. This feature allows sharing data and files between Bluetooth devices within a limited range.

The camera is 2 megapixels and can be set to take the picture full screen or full image. Once taken, it can be used as wallpaper, or saved for transmission or later viewing. The image can even be edited.

The Xenon also takes video. The amount depends on how much storage is available. If you use an SHDC card to expand memory, you can take longer video. Image size is adjustable from 1600 X 1200 to 320 X 240 pixels. The file size is commensurate. Other adjustments include image size, brightness, color effects, night mode.

Media capabilities include music, which can be downloaded or uploaded. The phone supports formats AAC, AAC+, MP3 and WMA. It can also be used for streaming radio.

Media mall is accessible with this phone. Applications include games, ring tones, puzzles, action, racing and more.

The GPS Navigator feature can be used to give you driving directions to any address in the continental US. There is also a search feature to find businesses or points of interest near your locations. The tool

provides an indicator showing you direction of travel, location and speed.

Another useful tool provided is YellowPages.com. This allows you to find businesses, call them, view ratings and get directions to the business.

There are four games supplied and more may be downloaded.

There are some applications available for download. The list is not very long, compared to what is offered by Apple and Research In Motion.

News on the web is easily available, with some offered in video form. More generally, the phone supports mobile video, which includes news, sports and celebrities. The video is quite good; there is some deterioration of the picture every so often, but the picture is generally excellent.

I've used several "smart" phones and each has its strengths and weaknesses. This phone is sleek, well designed and efficiently operational. I had few problems with it, other than the usual one of taking the time to learn how to use all the features.

**About:** LG Xenon with AT&T

**Manufacturer:** AT&T  
[www.wireless.att.com](http://www.wireless.att.com)

**Price:** about \$300 without commitment; \$150 with 2-year commitment, less \$50 rebate.

