



VueScan Reviewers' Guide

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Objective: a step-by-step instruction guide showing the reviewer how to review VueScan.

Name of product: VueScan

Purpose and uses: software interface to control scanning and saving of photographs, negatives and slides.

Brief Description: VueScan is a stand-alone application that works with most scanners to produce high-quality scans that have excellent color fidelity. It takes advantage of the advanced hardware capabilities of most scanners on the market today, and helps you do batch scanning while at the same time producing color-balanced and cropped images. VueScan comes pre-configured for the novice user but also has advanced features required by the professional to control the scanning and saving of photographs, negatives and slides.

Price:

Shareware: with basic functions enabled for evaluation.

Education version: free running under Linux OS

\$59.99 Standard Edition (Mac OS X & Windows 9x, NT, W2K, XP). One year free update.

\$79.99 Professional Edition (Mac OS X & Windows 9x, NT, W2K, XP). Unlimited updates.

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Website: <http://www.hamrick.com>

Feature Comparison Chart: www.hamrick.com/abo.html

Recent review: http://www.applelinks.com/pm/more.php?id=1150_0_1_0_M

Outline

Key Features Overview:

- Easy to install
- Supports Mac, Windows and Linux
- Supports almost every scanner on the market
- Infrared Cleaning Support (i.e. Digital ICE™)
- ICC Support (International Color Consortium profiles)
- IT8 Target Support
- Restore colors
- RAW File Save Option
- Color fidelity
- Batch scanning
- Productive workflow
- Unlimited free upgrades (for Professional edition)

Weaknesses:

- Interface is very functional, maybe not flashy enough for everyone.
- Total control can lead novices to unpredictable results

Guide through some complex manipulations (advanced features)

- Scanning a Reference Frame or “Advanced Workflow” (Film calibration)
- Producing an 8X10 from Negative or Slide.

Summary

Key Features Overview

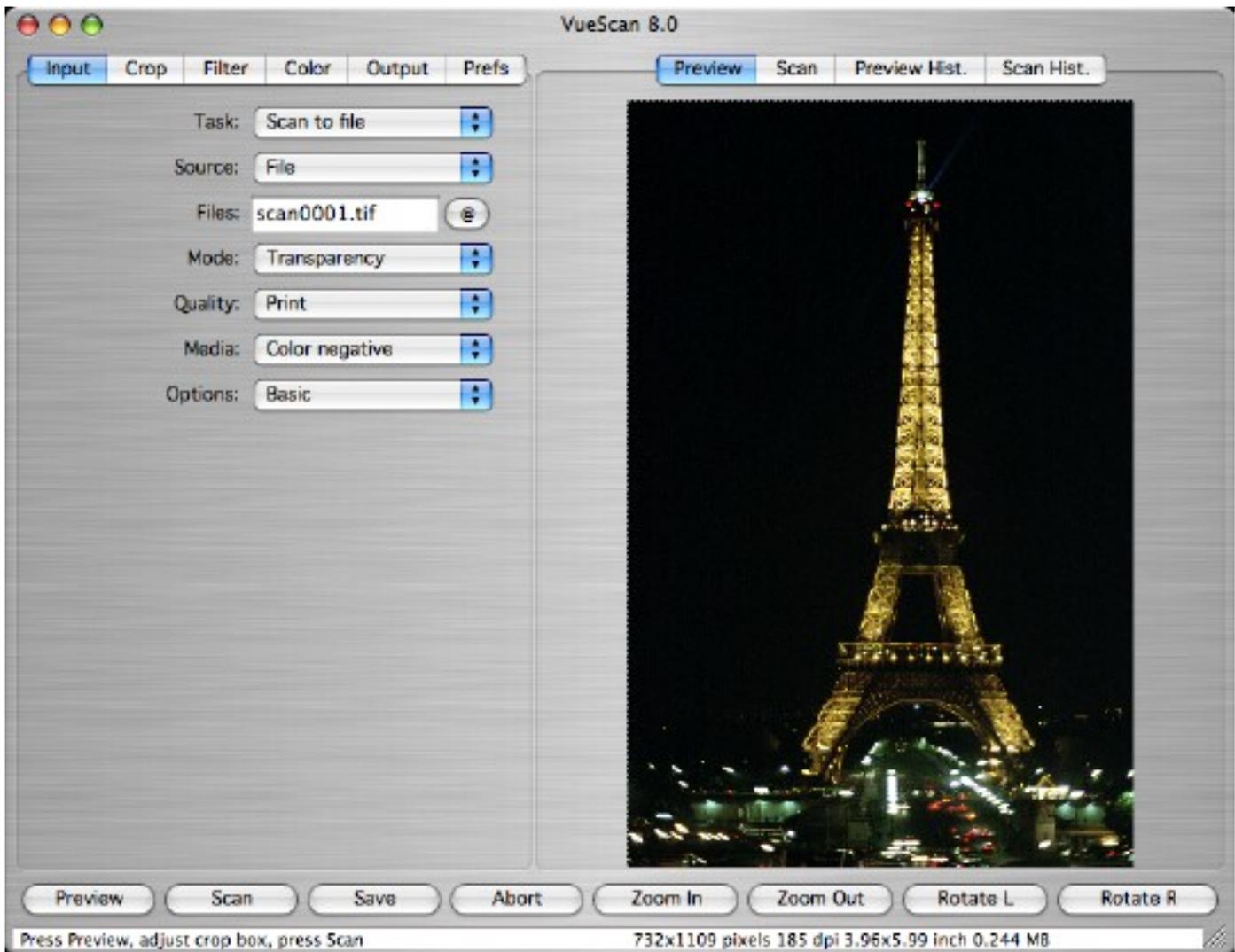
Installation – Unlike many other programs, VueScan requires little overhead in way of files to run on your computer and doesn't change any system files on your hard-drive. VueScan is not reliant on TWAIN or any other 3rd party scanner extensions. VueScan does not affect your scanner application that came with your scanner. VueScan is available for cross-platforms: Mac, Windows and Linux.

Download Locations:

Mac: <http://www.hamrick.com/files/vuesca80.dmg>
Windows: <http://www.hamrick.com/files/vuesca80.exe>
Linux: <http://www.hamrick.com/files/vuesca80.tgz>

Installs to: VueScan folder on desktop
Installs to: [C:\VueScan\
Installs to: vuescan folder in current directory

After downloading the file for your operating system install the program by double-clicking or using the appropriate un-packing program. VueScan will automatically run after installation.

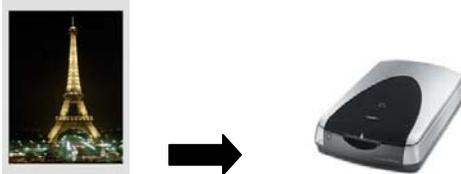


VueScan's Main Window (Mac OS X 10.3)

VueScan Scan Workflow

The following workflow describes the steps required to scan and save images with VueScan. A more detailed explanation of what's happening during each step is offered in the *VueScan Getting Started Guide*.

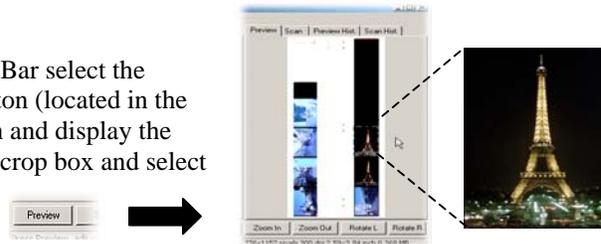
Step 1. Load Image



Load your image into the media adapter or place the image face down inside the scanner. Select Input|Mode (“Flatbed” for photos, “Transparency” for film) and Input|Type (i.e. Slide, Color Negative or B&W).

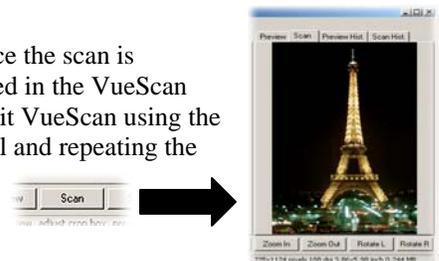
Step 2. Preview & Crop

On the Button Bar select the “Preview” button (located in the bottom left corner of the window.) VueScan will do a quick pre-scan and display the results in the Preview Panel. Click and Drag the mouse to adjust the crop box and select an area for scanning.



Step 3. Scan & Save

Select “Scan” from the Button Bar. Once the scan is finished the image is automatically saved in the VueScan directory as Crop0001.jpg. Your first scan has been completed. At this point you may quit VueScan using the file menu or you can select another image to scan by switching back to the Preview Panel and repeating the latter instructions of “Step 2.” (see above).



Supported Scanner List:

VueScan supports the majority of scanners. Ed Hamrick keeps the most up to date list. (See link below.)
<http://www.hamrick.com/vuescan/vuescan.htm#supported>

If you intend to upgrade or purchase additional scanners in the future, consider the Professional Edition of VueScan, as it includes unlimited free updates to support the latest scanners in the market.

Infrared Cleaning

Many new scanners now support a function that can virtually eliminate dust, scratches and fingerprints from tarnished film. The film is scanned twice, once in the normal way, than again using a special infrared light that illuminates the imperfections. VueScan combines the two scans so that the resulting image is nearly flawless in virtually all cases.

ICC Support

VueScan supports ICC profiles. In simple terms, devices like scanners, monitors and printers have differing abilities to show colors, and these abilities are not always equal. The term “color space” is used to define this range or capability of each piece of hardware. Manufacturers of hardware create default settings or profiles (ICC files) for their products that can be used by imaging software (e.g. Photoshop, VueScan). As a simple example for understanding color spaces, think of a child’s crayon set, the color space might be only eight colors, while a water-color paint set might be 12 or 16 colors. What ICC support does is allow images produced in one medium (water color) to be viewed or “mapped” in another medium (crayon) using the “best” approximation. In real world terms, it means images produced on a scanner can be approximated on a printer.



IT8 Target Support

Manufacturers of films and paper (e.g. Kodak) create standard samples (known as IT8 targets) under controlled conditions of how colors in their materials should appear. VueScan allows you to generate your own ICC profile files if you own one of these targets. This allows users to calibrate their individual scanners and printers using VueScan.

Restore Colors / Restore Fading

VueScan has two automatic features for restoring faded slides and prints. “Restore Colors” boosts the Reds, Blues and Greens (RGB values) making them more vivid. The “Restore Fading” function compensates for the tendency of older slides to turn red over time and for color negatives to develop a Cyan (blue) cast over time. Below you can see the before and after effect that the Restore Fading option (found in the Color Tab) has on a 40 year old slide.



Original slide (left) shows typical signs of color shifting, slide after Restore Fade applied using VueScan (right).

RAW File Save Option

VueScan has the ability to save the information captured directly from the scanner’s sensor. This feature is called “Raw” data save. (Note: if the scanner supports infrared cleaning (e.g. ICE) the user has the option of saving either the “clean” or “unclean” versions of the scan.) The strategy behind Raw File Save is that the original image is scanned only once at the highest resolution of the scanner with the intention of archiving. If necessary, VueScan can later reprocess the Raw image allowing the user to apply

different color correction techniques, sharpening, grain reduction etc. The Raw file is a standard Tiff file so it's also possible to open it with Photoshop.

Batch Scanning

Batch scanning is a time saving feature incorporated into VueScan. Rather than having to process and crop each frame one by one, batch scanning allows the user to set up and scan multiple frames in a continuous process. The strength of batch scanning becomes apparent when volumes of images are being scanned. The user can leave the computer work and return once the batch has been finished.

Weaknesses

Interface

While not as flashy as a lot of other programs, the VueScan philosophy is “form follows function”. The program is developed cross-platform (runs on Mac, Windows and Linux) so operates efficiently on all computers. The appearance from a programming perspective is kept deliberately simple.

Ultimate Control

VueScan is to other scanning programs as an F-18 is to a hot air balloon. Both will take you up, up and away, but one is going to do it faster and more precisely. The consequences of having more control can be going off course at a high rate of speed sometimes.

Calibrating Exposure and Correcting Orange Mask in Negative Film (“Advanced Workflow”)

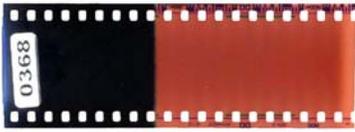
Correct exposure and color fidelity are the two main reasons why so many professionals and amateurs choose VueScan. The fact that film stocks will differ between manufacturers comes as no surprise. But that films manufactured by the same company, at the same factory, on the same day, can have drastically different characteristics after they are processed, is a cold hard reality for film photographers. Storage conditions, the quality of each lab's chemicals, time and temperature, all are factors in continually changing the film and the image on it. VueScan's creator has come up with an elegant solution. Use the scanner as an instrument for calibrating the properties of the film by scanning a reference frame (see next page).

The two-part procedure works like this:

Step one, take a blank piece of film from the roll that's about to be scanned, a piece that has been developed but not exposed to light. This usually means the leader before the first frame or the end of the roll after the last frame. The concept is simple, calibrate scanner exposure to the clearest part of the negative, this is the darkest tone any image on that roll of film will be able to attain. VueScan does a test scan on this “blank” area, and measures the amount of light that passes through the film. VueScan then automatically provides the user with the ideal exposure in the form of an exposure number. Some films use emulsions that need more light from the scanner to compensate for their denser composition, other films may require less exposure.

Step two involves correcting for orange mask. Most color negative films appear orange in color when examined. The “orange mask” is manufactured into the film to aid in printing on color paper prints, in scanning photography it becomes necessary to get rid of the orange mask since it doesn't serve the same purpose. VueScan uses the same piece of film sampled in the exposure calibration (see above) and adjusts the color values for accordingly to account for the orange mask.

Scanning a Reference Frame (“Advanced Workflow”)



Step 1 Locate the leader or a blank strip for the roll being scanned. The orange part of the leader is what we will be scanning. Insert the leader into your film holder or scanner. Change VueScan’s Input|Options so the program is set to scan color negatives. (see figure).

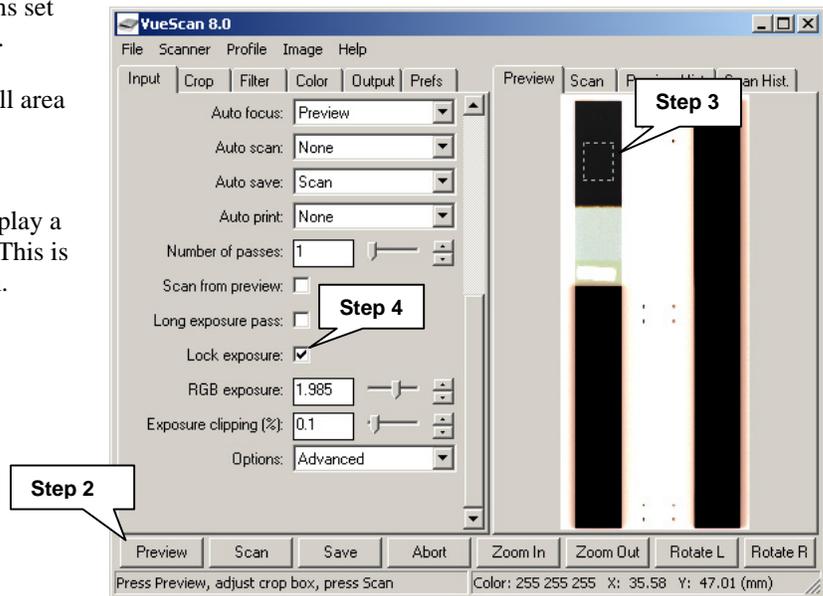


VueScan set for color negatives.

Step 2 Click the “Preview” button. Set Input|Options set the input tab to “Advanced” using the “Options” list.

Step 3 Crop. Using the mouse click and drag a small area of the film leader that appears in the Preview Tab.

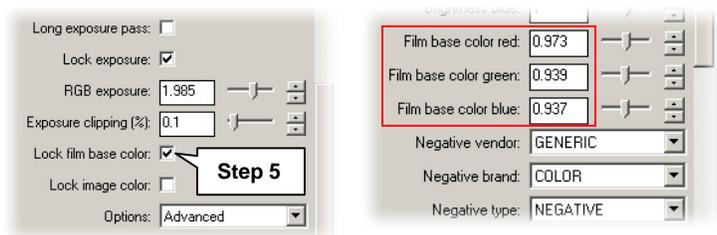
Step 4 Lock Exposure. Select and check the “Lock Exposure” option box. VueScan will pause, then display a new option call “RGB Exposure” with a value in it. This is the recommended exposure for the entire roll of film.



After previewing select a blank part of the film leader, then lock exposure.

Step 5 Select the “Preview” button again. VueScan will now display a new option check box call “Lock Film Color Base”. Check the option box. Red, Blue and Green color values now appear in the “Color” tab. The orange mask has now been calculated and VueScan will correct for it.

At this point the ideal exposure and mask value are known and set for the entire roll.



Color Tab now shows RGB values.

Producing an 8 X 10 from a negative or slide.

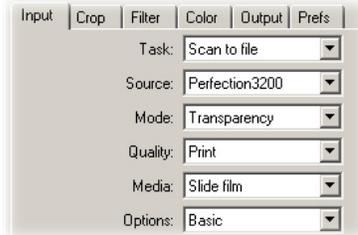
Objective: to guide the reviewer through the process of scanning a 35mm negative or slide with the intention of producing an 8X10 print. For historical as well as aesthetic reasons the 8X10 has been one of the main-stays of portrait photography. Most will agree that the 8X10 frames the human face with pleasing proportions.

Step 1. Preparation: After running VueScan, but prior to scanning.

I. Set Input Tab (choose negative or slide)

Check List:

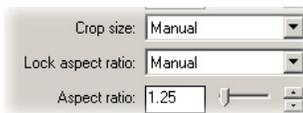
- Task** set to “Scan to File”.
- Source** set to *your* scanner.
- Mode** set to Transparency.
- Quality** set to “Print”
- Media** set to Color Negative or Slide



II. Set Crop Tab

Check List:

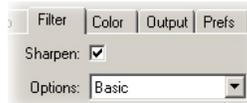
- Options** set to “Advanced”.
- Crop Size** set to “Manual”.
- Lock Aspect Ratio** set to “Manual” .
- Aspect Ratio** set to 1.25 (i.e. 8X10).



III. Set Filter Tab

Check List:

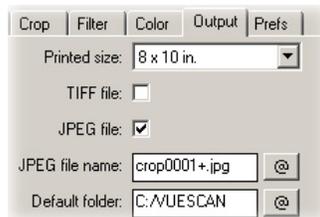
- Check** “Sharpening” (optional).



IV. Set Output Tab

Check List:

- Set **Printed Size** to “8X10 in.”



Step 2. Preview Scan

Once Step 1 is completed load your media into the film holder/scanner and select the “Preview” button from the bottom left corner.

Step 3. Cropping

Using the mouse click and drag the area you want to print as an 8X10. With the Aspect Ratio locked (Step 1, II) the crop box will automatically give you the proper dimensions for the 8X10.

Final Scan

Once you are satisfied with the cropped image select the “Scan” button from the button bar. After the scan completes VueScan will automatically save the file in the “VueScan” folder and open the image in your default image editor. You can continue editing the image in your photo editor and print using the editor’s print dialogue, or return to VueScan and print from the file menu.



Summary

The scanning software supplied with most scanners falls short when anything more than basic demands are placed on it. From a value-for-money point of view, nothing can compare to VueScan. It is rich with advanced features required by the professional but comes pre-configured for the novice in mind.

NOTES: