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Epson WorkForce DS-510

Editor Rating: **Excellent**

Epson WorkForce DS-510

MSRP \$399.99

Pros

Automatic document feeder. Duplex (two-sided) scanning. Excellent text recognition and document management.

Cons

Did not do well with recognizing text on business cards in our tests.

Bottom Line

The Epson WorkForce DS-510 document scanner offers a 50-sheet automatic document feeder, fast scans, duplex (two-sided) scanning, and a capable scan utility.

By M. David Stone

Epson lists the Epson WorkForce DS-510 on its website under workgroup scanners, and, indeed, it offers enough capability for a small office or workgroup. However, the low price and small size make it a strong candidate for a personal desktop scanner as well. More important, its fast speed, 50-sheet automatic document feeder (ADF), and bundled software make it a good fit for either role. It doesn't offer quite enough to replace the Canon imageFormula DR-C125 as Editors' Choice, but it comes in a close second.

Both of these scanners do an excellent job for optical character recognition (OCR) and document management, and they both offer similar raw scan speeds, with Epson rating the DS-510 at 26 pages per minute (ppm) and 52 images per minute (ipm)—with one image on each side of a page. The Canon DR-C125 is a little faster at text recognition and it does a better job with business cards, but it also costs more.

Setup and Software

At a compact 6.1 by 11.7 by 6.0 inches (HWD) with the trays closed, the DS-510 is small enough to easily fit on a crowded desk. As is typical, the top cover opens to turn into an input tray. You can feed paper without opening the front tray, but sliding it all the way out takes up only about six more inches in front of the scanner.

Setup is standard. Just plug in the power cord, install the software from disc, and connect the supplied USB cable. Epson lists the OS requirements as Windows XP through Windows 8 or Mac OS 10.5.x through 10.8.x. However, note that, unlike other manufacturers, Epson insisted that I install all current updates, so the OS requirements should be read as needing fully updated versions of these operating systems. For my tests, I used a system running Windows Vista.

Epson ships essentially the same software with the DS-510 as with other Epson models I've reviewed, including for example, the Epson WorkForce DS-6500\$849.00 at Epson. However, it adds Presto! BizCard to the mix for business-card scanning and management.

Epson's Document Capture Pro scan utility goes well beyond basic scanning, letting you add pages to or delete them from a group of already scanned pages, as well as change the order the pages are in. As you would expect, you can send scans to an assortment of destinations in a variety of formats: searchable PDF, image PDF, JPG, BMP, TIFF, Multi-TIFF, or PNG.

The destination choices include a printer, an FTP site, an email attachment, and disk. You can also send the scan to any application program that supports one of the formats that Document Capture Pro can save to, and you can send it to various cloud destinations, including a Web Folder, SharePoint, Evernote, Google Docs, and SugarSync.

In addition to BizCard and Document Capture Pro, Epson includes Abbyy FineReader 9.0 Sprint, for OCR, and both Twain and WIA drivers, with ISIS drivers available for downloading from the Epson Web site. Between the three drivers, you can scan with virtually any Windows program that includes a scan command.

Scan Speed

Like most document scanners, the DS-510 offers a 600 pixel per inch (ppi) optical resolution, which is more than you need for scanning most documents. For my tests, I used 300 ppi, which is a typical default resolution for document scanners.

With Document Capture Pro, and scanning to image PDF format, the scanner came in just a touch slower than its 26 ppm rating in simplex (one-sided) mode, at 24.8 ppm, and a touch faster than the rating in duplex (two-sided) mode, at 26.5 ppm and 52.9 ipm.

The difference was due entirely to variability in the time between giving the scan command and the scan actually starting. I timed the lag on several tests as ranging between 3 and 8 seconds, with no apparent reason for the differences. The actual time once the paper started feeding was roughly 53.5 seconds in all test runs.

Like most scanners, the DS-510 takes longer to scan and save to searchable PDF (sPDF) than to image PDF format, because it needs additional time to recognize the text. For our 25-sheet, 50-page test document, adding the recognition step changed the total time from 56.7 seconds to 82.3 seconds.

That's not as impressive as the DR-C125, which didn't add any time at all in my tests, scanning to either PDF or sPDF format in 60.0 seconds. However, the roughly 25 seconds extra for the DS-510 is a lot less than most scanners add for the OCR step.

Other Test Results

The DS-510 also did an impressive job on our OCR accuracy test. The combination of the scanner and FineReader read both our Times New Roman and Arial test pages at sizes as small as six points without a mistake, which was a bit better than the Canon DR-C125 managed to do.

Like the Canon scanner, it also did unusually well with some additional fonts that aren't part of our official tests. Here too, in fact, it did a little better than the Canon DR-C125, reading two highly stylized fonts with thick strokes at sizes as small as six points for one and five points for the other without a mistake.

Unfortunately the DS-510 didn't handle business cards very well in my tests. The scanner had no problems feeding stacks of cards, but the combination of the scanner and BizCard made at least one mistake on every card and three or more mistakes on well over half of them. About the best that can be said for these results is that the scanner will probably save you time over typing the information in from scratch.

The problem with business cards obviously won't be an issue if you don't need that particular capability. Even if you do need it, the scanner may work a lot better with a different business-card program, if you're willing to invest in one.

Unless you need to scan a lot of business cards, this scanner has a lot to recommend it. Its speed for scanning to various formats, its OCR accuracy, and its ability to scan to assorted destinations, including the cloud, let it stand toe to toe with the Canon DR-C125 for both document management and OCR applications. The Canon scanner's better results for business cards keep it in place as Editors' Choice. But the Epson WorkForce DS-510's strong points, including its lower price, can easily make it the right scanner for your needs.