

The logo for PC World, featuring the words "PC WORLD" in white, bold, sans-serif capital letters on a red rectangular background.

## Plustek SmartOffice PS252

**This ultracompact and low-priced scanner turns out good-looking images at a fast pace.**

**Richard Jantz**

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Weighing just 3.6 pounds, the \$399 (as of 2/6/07) Plustek SmartOffice PS252 is the smallest and least expensive document scanner we tested in our latest batch. Nevertheless, this 600-dpi model is a formidable rival to much larger models. The PS252 handles up to 50 pages in its automatic document feeder (ADF), performs double-sided page scanning, and produces high-quality text and color graphics scans.

The PS252's overall speed ranked close to the average of all the models tested (we use default settings for all trials). While it was reasonably fast at producing monochrome scans, it was comparatively slower at scanning color documents. For example, the PS252 took barely 10 seconds to scan two pages of forms (monochrome, 300 dpi), earning it the second-fastest score (after the Epson GT-2500) for that particular drill. But when scanning a double-sided color page into a 300-dpi PDF, the PS252 took nearly twice as long (35 seconds) as the fastest scanner (the Fujitsu ScanSnap s500) took to complete the same job.

The PS252 earned ratings of Superior for its color scans and Very Good for its monochrome scans. In our color tests, this scanner was proficient at generating a variety of color tones (blues, reds, greens, yellows) that matched the original's text and graphics. Its monochrome scans rendered easily readable text and small details in line art and other graphics.

It's easy to install and use the PS252, which isn't much larger than a loaf of bread at just 10.4 by 5.0 by 5.8 inches (width by depth by height). The scanner requires no assembly to use, though two optional parts--an output tray and extended paper guides that snap onto the ADF on the top--are in the box. During our tests, the paper guides helped keep pages straight as they entered the ADF. When not in use, the collapsible ADF folds up nicely.

The PS252's front panel has a one-touch, customizable button that starts one of nine predefined tasks, such as scan to searchable PDF, scan to printer, scan to e-mail, and so on. A small LED displays which function is selected. To help you recall what each function does, Plustek supplies a blank label that you can fill in and post nearby or stick on the scanner itself. One slight inconvenience is that the power switch is located on the back of the scanner instead of the front side.

The PS252 comes with a full complement of software that includes applications for scanning, image editing (Presto ImageFolio), document management (Presto PageManager 6.0), and business card recognition (BizCard Finder 2.5); TWAIN and WIA drivers are also included. Bundled as well is the limited-edition optical character recognition (OCR) package Abbyy FineReader 6.0 Sprint Plus, which is suitable for text conversion of simple documents but lacks the more sophisticated features of full-featured OCR applications, such as a text editor, a spelling checker, and task automation.

With its impressive image quality, low cost, and diminutive size, the Plustek SmartOffice PS252 is a good match for individual users or for small offices where both budget and desktop space are limited.

A small logo consisting of the letters "PCW" in white on a red background, followed by the number "82" in white on a blue background, all enclosed in a thin black border.

VERY GOOD  -- Richard Jantz



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September 19, 2006  
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The advertisement features a green background. At the top left, the text reads "HP COLOR LASERJET PRINTERS. The reliable workhorse for your business." followed by a "Learn more" link with a right-pointing arrow. In the top right corner is the HP logo. The central focus is a silver HP Color LaserJet printer with a photo of a family being printed. To the right of the printer is a circular award seal with a red center containing "PC" and "READERS' CHOICE" around the perimeter. Below the seal, the text "September 19, 2006" and "HP Printers" is displayed.