

Colortrac large format scanner generates return on investment for independent business

Alan Darbyshire



Alan Darbyshire started his independent business 3 years ago training on AutoCAD® AT Salford University. Responding to customer demand, Alan now provides a range of services from contract drafting to scanning of large format paper drawings. To enable him to offer a

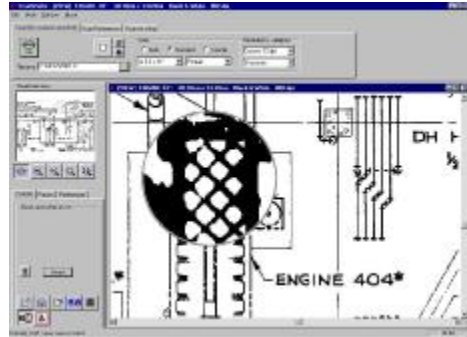
quality service at competitive prices, Alan invested in a Colortrac SmartLF 4080e supplied by UK distributor Allied Images through their Cambridge-based reseller Softcover International Limited. Softcover also supplied their Scan2CAD® software that enabled Alan to take paper drawings into CAD in half the time of other methods.

Portable and affordable

Alan takes up the story, "My training clients frequently asked about getting their old paper drawings into CAD, so I bought a second-hand Océ monochrome scanner to prove the viability of that part of the business. I was also working on a project for the Houses of Parliament where I was sent full-size templates of the windows and had to create the 2D DXF® outlines for my client who used the resultant DXF file to drive laser profile cutters." He continues, "However, after two years, it was time to change it. In any case, customers were asking for on-site A0 scanning so a portable scanner was needed. The SmartLF was that all right, and affordable. Good resolution, too."

How to get the best results

To meet the needs of his customers, Alan needs to produce high-quality output. As he points out, "Large format scanning is about more than just pushing a piece of paper through the scanner. It is about how to get a fragile drawing through when it has been curled up for 10 or 20



years." Alan adds, "A big Colortrac plus is that you can post-process a scan using their ScanWorks software. That way I can promise everybody that each scan is checked for readability and that it is in the correct orientation. If it can't be read on my scan, then it wasn't readable on the original drawing."

An absolute return

Asked to summarise his experience, Alan says, "I've found the SmartLF to be the ideal complement to my training and 2D/3D drafting business." He notes, "I've scanned up to 3,000 drawings in a month, though 1,000 is a more normal volume." He concludes, "Scanning is now about 25% of my business, so it does make sense for an independent like me to invest. Am I getting a return? Yes, absolutely."

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Links

www.colortrac.com/smartlf_range

www.allied-images.com

www.softcover.com

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