Scanner Pro:
Why I Switched

By Trey Peacock, Winning Cases Based On Science & Data For Over 25 Years
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If you've kept up with these articles over the past year—and what a year it's been—you'll recall that I've written previously about the value and utility of a reliable mobile PDF scanner application. I've even gone so far as to review some of the most well-known apps on the market and made a recommendation as to which was my personal favorite. While each app I reviewed in that article, including my final pick Prizmo, remains a viable and affordable choice for those looking to upgrade their on-the-go capability, I write today to tell you that my pick has changed. As of March 2021, I believe that Scanner Pro, available on iOS and Android devices, offers the best combination of functionality and usable interface at a low price point. Scanner Pro boasts all of the features offered by its peer apps such as iScanner, Scanbot, and Prizmo, but offers better editing and cloud file save settings combined with a pricepoint that makes it available to everyone, from the high school student annotating PDF readings to the lawyer who needs to quickly scan and share a settlement agreement at mediation.

Scanner Pro, while offering great capacity to scan, collate, and annotate PDFs on the go, falls short when it comes to more serious editing and should be used in combination with a PDF editing app. (I reviewed PDF editing apps a few months ago--visit my review here.) When paired together,

Scanner Pro and PDF Expert are a capable combo for any user. Let me add, if you have already purchased Prizmo or Scanbot, that's great and you should continue using them. But if you haven't purchased a scanning app, or are frustrated with your current app, then Scanner Pro is a great pick.

All PDF scanning software shares a few key features. The quality of these features largely dictates the app's functionality and a user's experience with the app. All scanning apps are able to snap photos of documents, images, book pages, screenshots, or even labels, and convert them into flat PDF files. Once PDF files are generated, the apps offer the ability to share, export, or save these files through whatever other platform they see fit. Additionally, many apps allow users to further edit documents, either through in-line editing or by annotating over the top of the existing text. More still are equipped with OCR technology, software that scans a PDF for identifiable words, then converts the contents into searchable, changeable text. This last feature, and the quality of the conversion, is perhaps the most important determinant of the quality of a PDF scanner app. The bit of time saved by an OCR system that makes fewer mistakes, oversights, or typos is important, especially considering that speed on-the-go is often high on the list of reasons for buying the app in the first place.

So why did I switch from Prizmo to Scanner Pro? Simply put, it's better. Scanner Pro, in my opinion, offers the best quality PDF scanning capability at the most acceptable price point. The app is usable, versatile, and relatively cheap, making it the go-to pick for professionals and casual users alike. On opening Scanner Pro, the user is taken to their "My Scans" home page. From here, choose to add another file, edit any existing files you have scanned, and export them to another application. Adding files is simple. Either choose to import an existing image or file and Scanner Pro will render it as a PDF within the app, or use your phone's camera to snap an image that the app will then convert into PDF form. The camera scan function is where many of Scanner Pro's best features appear. Users can choose to scan their image with Manual or Auto-Capture mode. Additionally, users can choose from several presets that determine how their image will be processed (Black and White, Color, Photograph, Greyscale). In the first mode, users simply center and focus the object they'd like to scan and snap the picture themselves. However, in my tests, the Auto-Scan mode was not only easier to use but produced significantly better results. This mode works by detecting edges and planes in the camera's field of view, focusing, adjusting for exposure, then auto-snapping an image without the need for users to press the shutter button. This mode works better for two reasons. First, the edge-detection used by Scanner Pro works incredibly well, makes few errors, and saves users the step of having to crop their image around the page borders after import. Second, the auto-capture feature allows users to keep their camera steadier while the photo is taking, since they no longer have to jostle or move their finger to the shutter. This makes for higher quality images with more legible text. Not to mention, Scanner Pro also employs nifty shadow-detection software that finds and eliminates shadows across documents that would negatively affect their quality. After capturing the image, users need wait only a brief moment while the Scanner Pro software reads their image and converts it into an editable searchable PDF document.

Once all the necessary images and files have been scanned and imported, users can choose from a diverse array of options offering extensive control over the look and arrangement of the PDFs

before export. By tapping on a given file, users are taken to the Edit menu. From there, one can annotate an image with handwritten notes or drawings using the variable pen and pencil tools, as well as highlight important passages or sections. Users can also adjust the brightness, contrast, and white balance of their files to ensure that the final look is satisfactory. Additionally, users can add another page to a file, merge two pages into a single file, or rearrange existing pages into a new order, all with a few simple taps and presses of the screen.

Now we come to Scanner Pro's text editing options. Using the app's sophisticated and consistently accurate OCR technology, users can execute a scan of their document's content and render it into blocks of text, which are able to be copied, pasted, or searched in the app's "Text" section. Scanner Pro recognizes text in over a dozen of the most common languages and, if the penmanship is up to scratch, can even read, detect, and render handwriting through its OCR. However, these results are less reliable than those received from documents with printed font.

Finally, users have a number of options for exporting and sharing their documents once edited. Scanner Pro includes an accessible button for choosing the aspect ratio or paper size of your exported document, along with a number of useful presets such as letter, legal, or business card size. With a few taps, users can export a document directly to their email, messaging, or social media apps. Users can also choose a cloud-based location like Dropbox to auto-upload each PDF created in Scanner Pro. Perhaps most conveniently, the app offers an option to begin editing a file in PDF Expert. Both apps are made by Readdle and integrate seamlessly with each other.

Scanner Pro, with all its bells and whistles, understandably costs money. Though free versions of PDF Scanner apps exist, I have found them unworkable due to watermarks and lack of OCR functionality. If you find yourself reaching for an app of this nature more than a few times a month, I would recommend purchasing the unlocked premium version of Scanner Pro for $20. It is an annual charge. But it's worth a couple of bucks each month to have this functionality at my fingertips. All of the aforementioned features, the easily navigable and intuitive user interface, and the consistently capable curation and maintenance of this app by its makers at Readdle make it my personal favorite and overall pick for those looking for a mobile PDF scanner app. And you don't have to take my word for it. It's been chosen the "Editor's Pick" in its category by Apple. It's been rated 4.9 out of 5 stars from 178,000 reviews on the Apple Store. And it's been downloaded by over 9 million users. So go ahead. Join the millions. And get scanning.

About the Author

Trey Peacock, a partner at [Susman Godfrey](), has been winning cases based on science and data for over 25 years. He has also chaired the firm's IT committee for over two decades. [Learn more about Trey here]().