

## **Book Scanner and the Future**

In today's world it seems like everything has gone digital. From our TVs to our music, to the way we start our cars...things are definitely changing.

In fact, when was the last time you sat down and actually wrote something out by hand? Seriously, try it sometime and see how bad your hand hurts.

As human nature would have it, we're constantly coming up with new ways to increase our efficiency. Plus, modern technology really takes to heart the phrase, "Good things come in small packages." Remember eight-track tapes? Do you even remember CDs? Who needs them anymore with the invention of MP3 players and smart phones? There's even something called a book scanner – a digital machine that converts physical books (you know, those funny bulky things with lots of pages) into digital images, electronic text and/or e-books.

While some might argue that this could become a problem when it comes to distribution, many consumers are excited to rid their shelves of bulky books and condense down to a simple, single electronic device. It surely makes for easier plane rides considering airlines now charge per person, per bag and per limb.

In the past, one way of scanning a complete book was through a process called "destructive scanning." It is affordable, but harmful to the book. One must cut off the book's binding so that the book, as a whole, is turned into individual, loose pieces of paper. Then, one can load these individual, loose pieces of paper into a document feeder.

Now, books can be easily distributed, reproduced and read on screen. Apple is diving into this with their new iPad, and companies have been producing "digital readers" for a few years now.

The process of using a book scanner is completed in a similar way that a regular scanner works, but many book scanners make it easy to copy a full book. After all, scanning a book page by page, turning it each time, could get a bit tedious. Plus you'd have to make sure your book was lined up well so that the images are satisfactory. The way the book scanner works is fairly simple. The book is placed on a glass plate and an optical array moves across the book (similar to how a copy machine works). Some scanners place the book face up in a v-shaped frame so that the book can be photographed, page-by-page. Some book scanners require you to turn the pages by hand while others do not.

Now that book scanning is such an easy process, it leads many to wonder if publishers will be facing similar issues that the music industry faces. Will it become too easy to share and distribute "pirated" books? Furthermore, will we lose sight of the joy of opening a book, feeling the crisp page float past our fingers as we smell that distinctive odor of the public library?