



# TECHNOLOGYTNT

*Technology Today and Tomorrow*

[www.technologytnt.com](http://www.technologytnt.com) vol4 no2

Fujitsu ScanSnap S500

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Scanners are quite a convenient way to make digital copies of loose sheet documents nowadays but we haven't seen one that does duplex (2-sided) scanning at such an affordable price. We've found it for under \$400 online and with its 600 dpi resolution; we think this is a pretty good scanner to use in our office. For more details, check out <http://www.fujitsu.com/us/services/computing/peripherals/scanners/workgroup/s500.html>.

The actual scanner is less than 6 pounds, has a footprint of slightly bigger than a legal paper with the output tray extended, and a 50-page automatic document feeder. Setup was fairly straightforward starting with installing the driver and supporting software like ScanSnap organizer, ABBYY FineReader for ScanSnap and CardMinder. The ScanSnap is where you initiate scanning since this unit doesn't support TWAIN which would have allowed scanning from other programs. By default, the scan is saved as a PDF file. You have the option to save it as a searchable PDF but that takes a bit longer to save or process and is about twice the file size. Alternatively, you can save to Word, Excel or PowerPoint using ABBYY or JPG.

We fed a mix of B&W and color stack of papers and the unit auto detected all without a problem. The scan button is a prominent green button on the unit and in normal mode, we were able to finish 18 ppm (pages per minute) as specified. Normal mode is 300dpi (b&w) or 150dpi (color) which is adequate but for higher resolution, excellent mode is available but would be slower. The unit can also be used as a business card reader and with the help of CardMinder software, to file or export to either Outlook or a CSV (comma-separated values) to name a few. Additionally, we also had the Rack2Filer software which conveniently organized our scanned documents into digital cabinets and binders.

If you're ready to switch all your hardcopy documents to digital, we recommend using this not only for its speed but its archival capabilities from the bundled software.