


Virtual Office News Reprint

The *Only* Practice Management/Technology Newsletter
for Financial Advisors

January 2006—Volume IV, Issue 1

Fujitsu-fi-5120C *by Joel P. Bruckenstein*

It was way back in 2001, when I began research for our first book, *Virtual Office Tools for a High Margin Practice*, that I tested my first Fujitsu color, duplex workgroup scanner: the Fujitsu 4110CU. Up until that time, my knowledge of scanners was limited to consumer scanners and so-called “small business” scanners sold at mass retailers, so I was a bit put off by the \$850 (street price) price tag. After a short period of time under actual work conditions, however, I became firmly convinced that the 4110CU was worth

every penny, and then some. It was capable of scanning 15 pages per minute simplex (one side of the page) or 7.5 pages per minute duplex (both sides of the page). This doesn't sound like much today, but back then, when a \$500 scanner got you about five to six pages per minute, it was impressive indeed. At the time, its straight paper path was unique, it produced excellent scans and, as I was soon to find out, its durability was excellent. I beat the machine to death, and it continued to perform flawlessly.



The 4110CU was supplanted on my desk by its successor, the fi-4120C, and then the fi-4120C2. Each of these machines offered improved performance over the preceding model while maintaining roughly the same price. Each garnered our highest recommendation by offering an excellent combination of price, performance, and reliability.

Introducing the fi-5120C

Now, continuing in this tradition of excellence, Fujitsu has just released the fi-5120C, a capable successor to one of our “best buy” recommendations, the Fujitsu fi-4120C2. Fujitsu has also released a successor to the fi-4220C2, the fi-5220C (essentially a 5120C with a flatbed), which we have not yet tested.

The 5120C maintains the Fujitsu formula during recent years of refining as opposed to radically changing a proven winner. These incremental improvements are apparent from the moment the scanner arrives at one's office.

Fujitsu-fi-5120C ... *Continued*

For a typical user, the out-of-box experience is about as good as it gets. Fujitsu provides a one-page "Quick Installation Guide," but I suggest that all but the most experienced readers use the more detailed multi-page/multi-language *fi-5120C Image Scanner Getting Started Guide*. This guide provides precise, step-by-step instructions for installing the scanner and the software in a number of different configurations.

For example, if you chose to install the TWAIN drivers, the installation guide makes it clear that the packaged scanning software for use with this driver is the ScandAll 21 image capturing software, and it instructs you to install this software after the TWAIN driver is installed. If you chose to use the more robust ISIS driver, the guide instructs you to install the ISIS compatible QuickScan Pro image capturing software instead.

I followed the instructions exactly as written, and I was able to install the scanner, the ISIS drivers, and the QuickScan Pro software in less than 15 minutes.

Once I had the driver and the software installed, I ran a number of test scans. I tried black and white scans, color scans, and grayscale scans. I performed simplex and duplex scans. I scanned into a number of different file formats including TIF, JPEG, and PDF. The overall scan quality was very high across the board. I scanned some documents that lesser scanners (and software) would find challenging, like black print on a blue background, but the scanner, combined with the software and the proper settings, delivered fine image quality.

As promised, the fi-5120C performed a little bit faster than the previous model. Fujitsu claims 30 images per minute simplex and 60 images per minute duplex for the fi-5120C versus 25 images per minute simplex and 50 images per minute duplex with the 4120C2. This appears about right to me.

Both the 5120C and the 5220C sport a new technology called ultrasonic double feed detection. According to Conrad Foster, President of CEO Image Systems, "This new technology immediately interrupts the scanning operation if more than one sheet of paper is being drawn into the paper path simultaneously, thereby minimizing damage to originals. This unique detection mechanism is unrivalled within the fi-5120C and fi-5220C class of document scanners and greatly improves reliability and ease of the scanning process." In addition, ultrasonic double-feed detection technology helps prevent lost images and enables larger batches of mixed document types to be scanned quickly, reliably, and automatically.

Also new in the fi-5120C is the ability to scan "hard cards." This is particularly useful for advisors who want to scan a copy of their clients' drivers' licenses, health insurance cards and other similar items. Scanning of embossed cards is now possible too.

Those of you who like to take your scanners on the road with you will be happy to know that while the dimensions of this model are the same as the previous version, it weights a bit less (8.4 lbs vs. 8.8 lbs). It is no lightweight when it comes to workloads, however. While earlier models in this class had a recommended duty cycle of between 500-750 pages per day, the 5120C is rated at 1,000 pages per day. As with previous models, little maintenance is required. Fujitsu recommends that pads be replaced every 50,000 pages or once a year. The recommended replacement cycle for the pick roller is every 100,000 pages or once year. Other than a regular cleaning, there is little more to do.

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Fujitsu-fi-5120C ... *Continued*

Software—A Word (or Two) of Warning

While the scanner itself is superb, there are a few minor annoyances that readers should be aware of. First, there is one little contradiction in the installation instructions for the optional Kofax VirtualReScan (VRS) software that could present a potential problem. The *Fujitsu Getting Started Guide* instructs readers to first install the scanner, followed by the driver, the scanning application and then the optional image processing software, which I understood to be VirtualReScan. The *VirtualReScan installation Guide*, packaged with the Kofax software, instructs the user to install the VirtualReScan software before installing anything else. Since I doubt most readers will bother with the VRS software, I don't believe this to be a major problem; however, Fujitsu should address this deficiency.

There is also a slightly more serious problem: unless you read the fine print, it's not apparent to the casual observer that some of the bundled software is demo software, which means that it is of limited value. Both sets of drivers (TWAIN and ISIS) are free, and ScandAll21, Fujitsu's TWAIN only scanning utility is a full working version. Unfortunately, QuickScan, the ISIS scanning utility only works for 30 launches; if you want to use it after that, you have to purchase it at a price of \$495. This is troubling, since ISIS drivers are, in our opinion, clearly preferable to TWAIN drivers, all other things being equal. ISIS drivers generally entail fewer pop-up screens as well as superior document enhancement controls (when combined with a good ISIS scanning utility). The scanner also ships with VirtualReScan and a demo version of Capio (another scanning utility) from Kofax. After the demo expires, this software costs \$ 299.95 retail.

You do, however, get a full version of Adobe Acrobat 7.0 Standard. Adobe Acrobat could be used as your primary scanning application, but Adobe Acrobat only supports TWAIN. In addition, we have some reservations about using Adobe Acrobat, a program we generally like, as your primary scanning interface. In the past we've received multiple reports from readers of problems scanning into Adobe Acrobat, usually after a piece of software (Acrobat or a driver) has undergone an "upgrade." When these problems appeared, getting answers from Adobe was difficult.

If you do need a scanning utility that is capable with both ISIS and TWAIN drivers, we suggest you consider EA Scanning from CEO Image Systems, a more reasonably priced alternative profiled elsewhere in this issue.

Of course, the selection of a scanning interface only applies to you if you are scanning directly into the Windows filing system. If you are scanning into a document management software package, the scanning interface and the document management features are packaged together, which means you will not require a program like QuickScan. CEO Executive Assistant and PaperPort Professional 10 are both, for example, complete document solutions that support ISIS drivers.

Recommendation

The Fujitsu fi-5120C continues Fujitsu's tradition of excellence in the small workgroup scanner niche. It is fast, flexible, and it produces excellent scans. A straight paper path, combined with the new ultrasonic double feed detection minimizes paper jams, protecting your original documents. The ability to effortlessly scan hard cards is a nice bonus. Maintenance requirements are minimal and, if past models are any indication, reliability will be superb.

Fujitsu-fi-5120C ... *Continued*

If you are looking for speed, quality, flexibility and durability in a small package, you will not find a better scanner than the Fujitsu fi-5120C. We are awarding it a VON Best Buy recommendation in the small workgroup scanner category.

PLEASE NOTE: We have been informed that the fi-5120C does not support Windows XP Home; it only works with XP Pro or Windows 2000 Pro. All of our tests were conducted on XP Pro systems. We generally recommend that readers install XP Pro on their PCs, so we don't perceive the lack of XP Home support as a major failing, however, if you plan to use the scanner on the road with computers other than your own, or on a home computer, you may want to examine alternative scanners.

EA for Scanning *by Joel P. Bruckenstein*

In most cases, we believe that the best way to "go paperless" and stay that way is to purchase good document management software. Over the years, we've recommended many good products in this class including Cabinet NG, CEO's Image Executive, CEO's Executive Assistant, DocuXplorer and PaperPort, to name just a few.

We do recognize, however, that not every reader will feel comfortable filing images using one of our recommended software programs. Some sole practitioners may believe that they are better off scanning documents onto their hard drive and then using Windows filing system to store and retrieve files. For search capabilities, one could use the built-in Windows search. Or, a better option might be to use one of the many desktop search engines available at little or no cost, such as Copernic Desktop Search, Google Desktop Search, MSN Search Toolbar with Windows Desktop Search and Yahoo Desktop Search.

If you do decide to go this route, you'll need a software program capable of simply getting the image onto your hard drive and perhaps "cleaning it up" to make it more legible. If you purchased a Fujitsu scanner and are content to use a TWAIN driver, ScandAll21, a free program, may work for you. Adobe Acrobat is another option. However, if you want to use ISIS drivers, inexpensive software is difficult to come by. You could easily end up paying \$200 or more for such software.

Priced at \$99, with an additional discount available for *Virtual Office News* subscribers, EA for Scanning is an inexpensive alternative. EA for Scanning is, essentially, the scanning module of Executive Assistant with some of the functionality disabled. What remains is a very capable scanning front end.

Users can scan to three file formats: TIF, JPG, and PDF. You can scan in color, B&W or grayscale. The program has numerous filters that improve the scanning process. For example, the "de-skew" filter automatically senses and straightens crooked pages. The "noise" filter removes little dots that are often present when you scan a fax. You can even "erase" part of a page virtually

If you are scanning multiple pages in the duplex mode, but some of the pages are only printed on

EA for Scanning ... *Continued*

one side, you can have the software automatically remove the black pages from the file. As an alternative, if you want to scan a number of distinct documents at one time, you can put a blank sheet of paper between the documents and set the program to divide the document wherever a blank page is inserted.

After you have completed a batch scan, EA for Scanning allows you to add additional pages to the file, and place them where you want to in the document. Many scanning utilities offer this functionality. Less common, however, is this program's ability to create mixed documents. This means that you can scan a color page into a black and white file, or you can scan a black and white image into a color file.

EA for Scanning does an excellent job of filtering out background colors. If you have ever received a newsletter printed in black ink on medium blue paper and tried to scan it, you may have found the resulting scan illegible. With EA, you can filter out the blue background (or red, or green). The resulting scan appears as if it was black printed on white!

Some other nice touches include the ability to print from within the program so if you need to make a copy, you can scan the document, "clean it up," and then print a perfect copy from your printer. If you use Windows XP Pro or a stand-alone faxing program, you can fax from right within EA.

You can also email from EA. You can choose to send all pages, or only the ones you select. Whenever you email a scan from within the program, a copy is saved to a directory so that you have a record of each scan you've emailed for compliance purposes.

Most scanning utilities that have a scan interface with ISIS drivers are relatively expensive. By contrast, EA for Scanning is surprisingly affordable. It is also a highly competent performer. Of course, for about \$150 more, you get a great deal of additional functionality in the full version of Executive Assistant including the ability to annotate, the filing system, and Executive Assistant's fine retrieval capabilities, but not everybody needs that much power. EA for Scanning allows you to scan, "clean" images, and save them to your hard drive. It also allows you to easily print, fax, copy and email your scans. If that is all you need to do, EA for Scanning is the way to go. For additional information, please visit: <http://www.ceoimage.com/financial.htm>.

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