

# IS THAT A SCANNER IN YOUR POCKET? YES, IT IS.

**H**ave a paper document you want to save? No scanner or copier close by? Would a PDF be ideal? Have a smartphone?

Mobile scanning may be the solution.

A January 2017 report from the Pew Research Center reported that 97% of American adults own cell phones. Smartphones account for 77% of cell phones in 2017, up from 35% in 2011 (<http://www.pewinternet.org/fact-sheet/mobile/>).

Do a simple Google search about mobile scanning and you will find a multitude of programs and reviews from the past couple of years. Mobile scanning rose to hot topic status recently with Google's release of PhotoScan last fall and Adobe's AdobeScan this summer.

Programs and prices will vary depending on your needs. Many scanning options are free and integrate with apps and accounts you already use. The scanning discussed here is done by a smartphone with a camera to capture the image and an app. All apps are not available for all operating systems. Most apps are available for iOS and Android. If you are searching for available apps, consider using your operating system and device as search terms.

How could mobile scanning be useful? Making PDFs of:

- Items you have already in print but can't or haven't scanned another way (articles, reference tables, drug instructions, etc.)
- Items you can take a photo of but don't necessarily want to keep as an image file, such as information that a colleague has one copy of (i.e., articles) or information you can read but cannot take a copy of (i.e., posters at conferences)
- Information you want to put into cloud storage so you can access it from multiple devices and locations or that you want to share



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- Business cards at conferences
- Receipts for business meals

#### Points to Ponder

- Can you scan multiple pages into one file?
- What file types are offered (.pdf, .jpg, .png)?
- Can you choose the type of file?
- Can you rename files or only use a default name?
- Is optical character recognition (OCR) an option? When you scan, the usual default is a photo of the item you scanned. If OCR is performed on your item, the program tries to match parts of the image to known items (like the alphabet) to make it into a form that you can search and edit. This is why you can interact with some PDF files and not others. Examples of interacting include copying words and phrases onto your computer clipboard to use elsewhere, finding words or phrases in your document, editing and importing into a word processing program.
- Where are your scans saved? Do you have a choice, or is the app tied to saving in one place only?
- What is the privacy policy for the app and your document?


#### Recently Published Reviews

*PC Magazine* reviewed 10 mobile scanning apps this summer (<https://www.pcmag.com/roundup/349681/the-best-mobile-scanning-apps>), including popular free apps Evernote and Adobe Acrobat. Curiously, it reviews the Dropbox business app that is not free even though you can use the Dropbox app to scan without the business upgrade. The review has a table comparing features across apps; remember that you may not need all the bells and whistles for your purposes.

Although CNET's full review is several years old (<https://www.cnet.com/how-to/best-scanning-apps-for-android-and-iphone/>), it contains good information and was updated in a recent how-to blog at <https://www.cnet.com/how-to/turn-your-phone-into-a-document-scanner-for-free/>.

For many, Dropbox is synonymous with cloud storage and sharing although it is not the only service or app for those functions. Due to its popularity, here is the link to Dropbox scanning without a business account: <https://www.dropbox.com/help/mobile/document-scanning>.

In the next issue, this column will look at another way to collect, organize and annotate your information using a citation management program.

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*Do you need a full copy of an article? A literature search? Economic facts and figures about veterinary practice? Animal owner demographics and spending patterns? Texas veterinarians may contact the Medical Sciences Library at Texas A&M University for assistance at no cost for reference service, literature searching and copies of articles, chapters and conference papers from our collection. Details can be found at <http://guides.library.tamu.edu/txvetalum>.*