

Classroom **Tool**

Review



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VuPoint Magic Wand Scanner

Scan any surface with a wave of your hand. This is a fantastic tool, even if it takes a little practice.



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The VuPoint Magic Wand Portable Scanner is well-named. The ability to simply wave a slender device across any image, scan it, and send it to your computer does seem a lot like magic. And unlike any magic you'll see on the stage, this device isn't just smoke and mirrors.

We got our hands on the Magic Wand II (also known as PDSWF-ST44-VP). The stats on the scanner are fairly impressive. At a "low" resolution of 300 DPI, you can create a scan over eight feet long. Even at the highest resolution, 900 DPI, you have 35 inches to work with. The scan width is fixed at only 8.35" —about the width of a piece of typing paper. It supports microSD cards of up to 32 GB, and has built-in b/g/n Wi-Fi that will transmit to another device up to 5 meters away. The biggest drawback might be the limitations of the batteries; after only a few minutes of use the battery was beginning to run down.

Does this power translate into scan quality, though? You can't deny that the resolution on the images is deeply impressive. Scan a piece of fabric, and you can see every stitch. What we found, though, is that some images ended up with a visible grain to them along the direction the scanner was swiped, almost as if they'd been colored in with pencils. Fortunately, this problem only seems to crop up at the lower quality settings.





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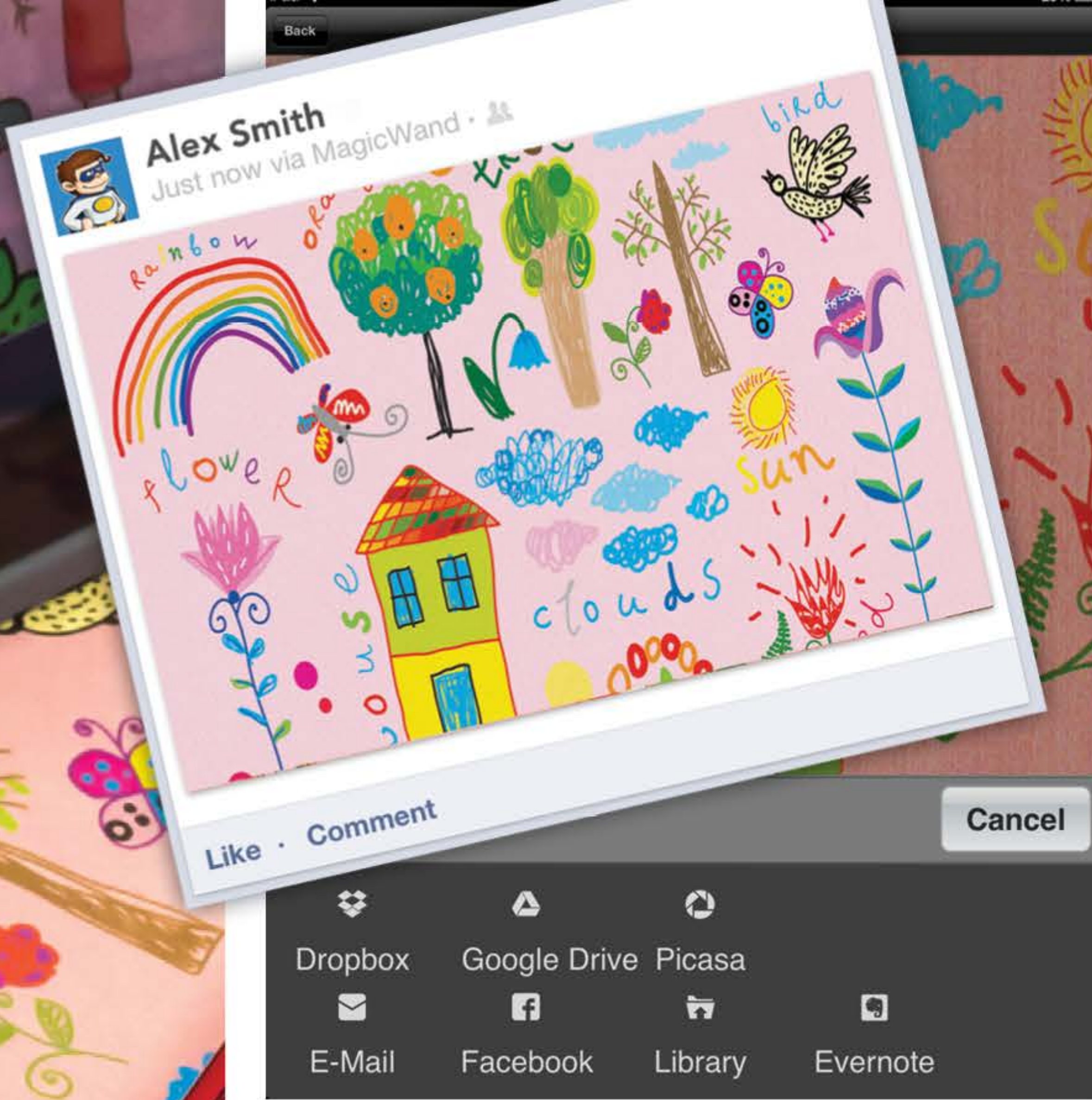


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The quality also relies on your own skill with the scanner—let the scanner swivel, and the image distorts. However, as long as you move the Magic Wand slowly, it'll figure out the correct proportions for your image. Move too fast, and it gets a little confused and tends to squash your image—but it'll warn you there was a problem with a flashing red error light. That feedback is really helpful and lets you know to try again. With a little effort, it's not hard to take some really good-looking scans.

Another place the Magic Wand really comes through is as a document scanner. The software included with the device sports OCR (Optical Character Recognition) that can turn your scanned image into real text. The software works almost flawlessly, thanks to the high resolution of the scans. The Magic Wand really makes it easy to turn a hard copy into a usable electronic document.





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There are a lot of add-ons for the Magic Wand that can make it an even more fun and functional tool. The free iPad app lets you connect to the scanner wirelessly, browse your images, and even share them on the web or social media on the spot. You can also pick up an optional table top stand (shown below) or auto-feed docking station for the scanner that will turn it into an automatic document scanner. Snap the scanner into place and you can feed through documents without worrying about unsteady hands producing less-than-perfect results.





The optional table top stand scanner attachment means shaky hands don't lead to shaky scans! For precise work, the extra price is worth it.

The take-away here is how usable the scanner is. The controls and display are simple, but very functional. Looking at your images is easy, too—you can connect to the device with either a USB or wifi, and you can even check out your images via the handy iPad app. And of course, having a portable, hand-held scanner that you can run over any flat surface is just pretty cool, right? We highly recommend checking it out.

The Magic Wand II usually retails for \$99.99—not a lot, given how great the functionality is, but still a sizable chunk of money. If you're looking for a slightly cheaper option, the original Magic Wand (we tested out model ST415BU shown above with optional Table Top Stand) has pretty much all the same quality and convenience and can usually be found a bit cheaper. The big drawback to the older model? No wifi.



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