



The Xerox name is one of the best known in the business, and now Visioneer is exploiting this by rebranding some of its scanners with that it. Ross Farmer finds out why...

# SCANNING THE HORIZON

At first it seems like a fairly strange situation. The perfectly successful Visioneer brand would appear to have no trouble selling scanners, but the company behind it are now also selling scanners under the Xerox brand.

These aren't actual Xerox scanners, they're Visioneer scanners which have been given a lick of paint and rebranded with the Xerox name.

Jennifer Watts, product and marketing manager at Visioneer, explains the situation: "Visioneer and Xerox entered a trademark licensing agreement in August 2003. The Xerox scanners are developed, marketed and supported by Visioneer, based on this agreement.

"The Visioneer brand is more of a consumer and SOHO range and offers great value for money. The Xerox brand offers a broader business range, but also a select choice of consumer offerings," she

continues.

Visioneer's use of the brand is still in its infancy, with only three products in the range at present. So what is it the Xerox name can offer to make the split worthwhile? Jennifer explains further: "The Xerox scanner range combines Visioneer's technology and industry acceptance with a household brand name."

## The products

So that's cleared up the reason why the same company is offering the two competing brands. Jennifer admits that both are sold through different channels and are to an extent in competition, but with different target markets it's simply a way of expanding the company's reach in the overall market.

The branding doesn't amount to a whole hill of beans, however, unless the

actual product is any good. "Xerox scanners provide great quality images with fantastic detail and colour, all at high speeds and low prices," asserts Jennifer. "All three scanners in the range have five OneTouch buttons that allow you to send scanned images to your printer, email account, document management software, word processing application, image editing software or just about any program you choose. The scanners also look stylish with a slimline landscape design.

"The consumer products are designed for ease of use and maximum functionality for both home and small office users. The OneTouch buttons provide a simple interface for beginners, while advanced users can also edit setting and get the most out of their scans using the TWAIN driver."

We had the chance to get to grips with the Xerox 4800TA OneTouch scanner



(see main image), and were very pleased by it. It's a PC-only device (Mac users need not apply) which comes with its own transparency reader and software, all for £89.99. It's not the slimmest scanner we've ever seen, but the side-tilting lid is a useful addition, and it's easy enough to get working. Scan quality is top notch.

### New arrival

Jennifer tells us a little about the latest addition to the range, the DocuMate 252 (pictured below right): "This is taken from the professional range," she says. "This is a sheet-fed 25ppm duplex scanner with 50 page ADF. In non-technical terms, this means it can scan up to 50 pages at a time, scanning both sides of the page at once and is extremely fast at 25 pages a minute. The colour and detail quality are not lost either, with a resolution of 600dpi and 42-bit colour depth.

"This scanner has already been awarded the AIIIM Best Of Show award for Hardware: Desktop Scanning and two 'Best Product' awards at RetailVision Spring 2004 in the US."

### The future of scanning

This is all well and good, but we feel obliged to ask whether the scanner market is really anything to be getting excited about these days. After all, as far as the consumer is concerned, one of the main reasons for owning a scanner is to convert developed photographs into computer graphics files. Back in the days when digital cameras were rarer than a leviathan casserole, this was an excellent way for the less-than-extremely-wealthy

to get into digital imaging, but those days are past. Is the consumer scanner trade still a worthwhile market?

"Absolutely!" Jennifer says. "Although many people now have digital cameras, we all have photographs, documents, negatives and slides that we may want to enhance or archive. With one of our scanners, these pages can be saved in digital format and edited in one of the many software applications."

However, she is willing to admit that "sales of scanners have declined over the last years, as many customers go for multi-functional products, ie printer and scanner combinations. However, we are finding many customers returning to us to

purchase these high-end consumer scanners as the high resolution and colour quality simply cannot be matched by a multi-functional product. Also, there is a transparency adaptor need which multi-functional products do not currently support."

It would seem then that there is still enough of a market out there to make these products worth your while, particularly among the more demanding end user, be it a consumer or a business.

### The final word

"Scanners will always be popular," says Jennifer, "as no matter how much we all strive for the paperless office, we all still amass letters, documents, pictures and other pages. By scanning these, not only can they be archived, but also edited and enhanced.

"The photo editing software allows images to be touched up, colours to be changed, text added or even calendars or greeting cards to be created. The OCR (Optical

Character Recognition) software allows pages of text to be scanned and then converted into completely editable text documents. The image quality and speed of scanners will continue to improve, saving people even more time and money."

Obviously as retailers you have quite a lot of choice over which brands you want to stock, but you have to concede that the Xerox name is pretty strong in the minds of consumers. If you would like to get your hands on some stock, you can contact Visioneer on 0870 7744480, email on [uksales@visioneer.com](mailto:uksales@visioneer.com), or visit the company's website which is located at [www.xeroxscanners.co.uk](http://www.xeroxscanners.co.uk)

**No matter how much we strive for the paperless office, we still amass pages that need to be scanned**



Visioneer's own 6600 scanner



The Xerox DocuMate 252 scanner