Brother ADS-3600W

A prize scanning package – fast and versatile, with excellent cloud support, all at a price SMBs will love

SCORE ★★★★★

PRICE £461 exc VAT from ebuyer.com

Brother's ADS-3600W has every document-digitising feature a small or medium-sized business could possibly need. It offers a fast 50ppm scan speed and a generous 50-page ADF –and it will take some stick, with a 5,000-sheet daily duty cycle. Hooking it up is easy: there's support for direct PC connection via USB 3, or your choice of Gigabit Ethernet and 802.11n wireless connections. There's also NFC support, so you can connect a compatible mobile device with a tap.

At the front, the ADS-3600W's onboard controls are accessed via a 9.3cm LCD colour touchscreen. We found it effortless to get connected to our wireless network via WPS. There's also an embedded web-management console that can be used for configuration – although you can't have wired and wireless networks active concurrently.

Stepping through the installation routine on our Windows 10 desktop was largely automatic. The software discovered the scanner and loaded a spread of support software for us: you get Brother's ControlCenter4 (CC4) scan-management tool and Nuance's PaperPort 14 SE digital file cabinet, plus ABBYY FineReader 11 Pro and PDF Transformer+ OCR tools. These latter two products are downloaded on demand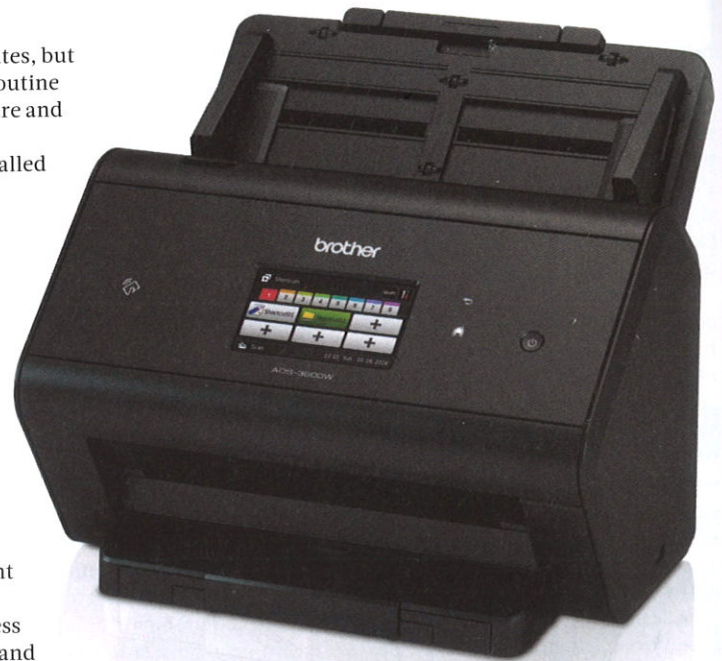, stretching the installation process to a lengthy 22 minutes, but we were pleased to see the routine also updated the CC4 software and the scanner's firmware.

Since the software is installed on each PC in your office, it registers that computer as a destination in the scanner's Scan to PC menu, so you can send digital documents direct to your desktop. A USB host port also lets you scan directly to a local storage device, and from the web console you can configure scans to email servers, FTP sites and network shares, which all then appear as destinations in the LCD panel. If you want to send a scan directly to an individual, there's an address book for 300 email entries, and integration with LDAP and Active Directory authentication.

The embedded Scan to Mobile option is another smart feature. This scans a document and uploads it to Brother's website with PIN protection, then displays a QR code on the LCD panel. You can then use a mobile app (Windows Phones' Bing Vision, in our case) to scan the QR code and download the file to your device.

An alternative for iOS users is Brother's iPrint&Scan iOS app. We found this spotted the scanner on the network right away, and let us remotely initiate scans and pull down documents to our iPad. Even better is the ability to assign scan shortcuts to NFC ID tags: we registered an ID tag with a scan-to-Dropbox shortcut, and on swiping it over the scanner the menu option popped up, ready to go.

Supported cloud services include Dropbox, Google Drive, OneDrive, OneNote, Evernote and Box. We used Brother's Web Connect portal to set up our Dropbox and Google Drive accounts in less than two minutes.

ABOVE The Brother ADS-3600W has every document digitising feature a SMB could need

So what about the fundamentals? We're happy to say we found the ADS-3600W's paper handling highly creditable. We fed a mix of till receipts, statements and bills through the ADF with few problems. On the rare occasion a jam did occur, the scanner stopped before causing any damage. We were also able to scan embossed credit cards, providing they were inserted short side down.

What's more, the ADS-3600W's claimed 50ppm scan speed is perfectly achievable – 200dpi duplex scans of our sheaf of 50 bank statements took precisely 60 seconds. The same speed is attainable for 300dpi mono scans, but here we found the speed fell to 32ppm when we switched to colour. At 600dpi, mono and colour speeds tumble to 24ppm and 8ppm, but there's rarely a need to use such a high resolution: 200dpi is fine for creating document archives and searchable PDFs.

"The ADS-3600W's speed and output quality are impressive, as is cloud support – and the price is very tempting indeed"

It adds up to a comprehensive set of business scanning features. Speed and output quality are impressive, as is cloud support – and the price is very tempting indeed, making this our SMB desktop scanner of choice.

LEFT The ADS-3600W has a good software bundle and offers top-notch cloud support

SPECIFICATIONS
600dpi colour scanner ● 50ppm @ 200dpi colour/mono ● simplex/duplex ● 50-page ADF ● 9.3cm colour touchscreen ● USB 3, USB 2 host ● Gigabit Ethernet ● 802.11n wireless ● NFC ● Wi-Fi Direct ● 5,000 pages per day ● external PSU ● Brother ControlCenter4, Nuance PaperPort 14 SE, ABBYY FineReader 11 Pro and PDF Transformer+ software ● TWAIN, ISIS and WIA drivers ● 306 x 258 x 250mm (WDH, closed) ● 1yr RTB warranty