Topics outside
FLAAR's coverage

FLAAR Staff answering inquiries at UFM, Guatemala.

We regret is not feasible to cover certain topic(s). Please realize that FLAAR is a non-profit research institute at a university. Our web site attempts to indicate what topics we are able to cover. It's easy to overlook the notes on the topics that it's simply not realistic to handle. This list repeats those topics we do not cover.

To date we have sent answers to over 5,792 people who have sent us questions. However occasionally there are detailed questions that are not within our usual range.

We regret we are not able to answer your question; if we at least have a report close to your request, please address your question to the manufacturers or resellers there-in, not back to us.

Software questions (someone collected money for your software, they should help you out). Consider training in your local area: try the nearest community college or look in the sections on training or book reviews in various sites of the FLAAR network.

Drivers (printer drivers, especially for old printers). Again, this is the responsibility of the people who sold you the hardware and software. If you bought from a cheap source now you know why it was such a good deal. If your printer came with drivers only (in other words with no RIP) that is part of your problem. In most cases you need RIP software to run your printer. However if you have an old printer, we are unable to find a source for an old RIP to run that printer. Current RIPs tend to run only current printers. We have a warning about this in our report on "buying a used printer…the downsides."

RIP: settings, options, selections, etc. Please understand we cannot diagnose a problem long distance. The company that sold you the RIP, the ink, the media, or the printer are responsible for seeing that everything works. We can suggest good RIPs before you make the mistake of buying an off-brand RIP, but kind of hard for us to bail you out after you got a RIP that we do not recommend. Now you know why we perhaps don't list that brand. We do, however, cover RIPs, in the sense of which ones are recommended. Once you have a RIP (recommended or other) you may need training or assistance from the vendor. Some RIPs are very easy to install and even easier to use. Others require a training course (but are well worth the investment. So we can help you on suggestions, but no, we can't provide training or hold your hand.

Supplies such as ribbons; or any supplies for older obsolete printers. We do, however, list inks. Whether any ink is appropriate for your particular use, only you can decide. Thus we list inks but are neutral in recommendations.

Color management: please consult the book review and training sections; check out the trade magazines. Every FLAAR site has an index. We have worked hard to develop these indices. They are there for you. The only way to survive color management is to buy your printer + your RIP + your color management program all from the same single source. If you buy different bits and pieces of your system from different vendors, no one will take the responsibility to put it together or help you get it all to work.

Again, if you paid someone for your printer and for your RIP then they are the ones who should assist you until your prints turn out flawlessly. If there is inadequate service after the sale, return the printer and buy a better system from a company who knows enough about digital imaging to get you up and running. Perhaps you bought the wrong brand of printer, or maybe you have an inadequate RIP? This is why we provide a service to assist people BEFORE they buy. So if you wish to return to the starting line, find the Inquiry Form on any of our web sites (www.wide-format-printers.org, link for CONTACT). Fill out the form as though you wish to start from scratch. We will be glad to respond with information that will be of help.

But please understand, we have no realistic manner to solve software problems long distance.

Recommendations on **where to have your artwork printed** as giclee. There are many nice places but we get too many complaints about problems of color matching or simply inadequate quality, so we prefer to avoid the potential problems of recommending a place. In the long run you will have more enjoyment if you do your own fine art printing. If you wish to do that, then fill out the provisional inquiry form and we will reply with the appropriate information.

Six different people handle incoming inquiries on two different continents, so the person who answered this initial e-mail of yours will not necessarily be the same person who gets your follow-up inquiry. This is why we ask that you please fill out the Inquiry Form. FLAAR does not sell printers, so you are under no obligation to buy anything, nor pay for the reports either. But if you intend to have many prints made, or do this as a hobby, in the long run you have have more personal satisfaction if you have your own printer in your own home or studio. Everyone is a beginner, so don't worry if you have zero experience. Our informative reports will provide all the basic information, links, and e-mail addresses on where to go to get help getting started.

Lamination problems: it is not realistic to solve a lamination problem long-distance. If their lamination does not work, we would recommend LEDCO, USI, GBC, or Seal. Someone is selling you equipment and laminate; it would seem to be their responsibility to make it work for you.

Business plans: for obvious reasons it is not realistic for us to formulate a business plan for everyone who writes in.

Costs and pricing: costs vary by country, by season, by whim even. Our web site is read in more than 60 countries worldwide. Our offices are in Germany and Guatemala and although we are actually an American research institute we don't have enough staff to keep track of prices for scores of brands and dozens of models.

Attachments: due to the huge volume of incoming e-mail our staff does not have the time to open everyone's attachments. We gladly read all e-mails, but zero attachments.

Ink longevity: if you believe in the tooth fairy then you will love the ink longevity claims. Common sense and a basic understanding of lighting would indicate to anyone that an aqueous dye ink won't last very long in sunlight or in room lighting either. We cover this question in "what to watch out for when the sales rep is moving in for the sale" as well as in some of our reports on ink. The only tests we accept are those that take place in real life. Thus we have prints with Encad dye-based inks that

are on the wall now for several years and still holding up. We also know that withering sun, blazing California sun, won't put a dent in HP's new dye based inks even outside until over a week of direct sunlight that erased magic marker, ballpoint pen, and all other normal inks. Yet the HP inks only began to flinch after 10 days (when the image was still in full glory, with only a bit of light cyan gone, and that only noticeable when the outside image was compared with one kept inside).

Cheap desktop printers. They don't work and we don't recommend them or even want to hear about them. There are many good reasons why our web site is titled "wide-format-printers" and "large-format-printers," those are the subjects we cover. If you asked about other equipment, sorry, our staff of eight are working hard at answering the many people who appropriately asked about large format inkjet printers and please realize we just can't cover all the other kinds of hardware and software.

If you have a question about an Epson printer, again, now perhaps you realize why it was such a low price. Please realize we are unable to resurrect a product that does not provide what the ads skillfully lead you to believe. We get more complaints on the Epson 1520, Epson 3000, and the new Epson 1270 than all other printer makes and models combined. There are Epson inkjet printer user group web sites where you can report this kind of problem, at least so that other people won't fall into the same pitfall. Once such Epson user group is www.lexen or some similar sounding site but we have not been able to find it.

Cheap scanners; sorry, you get what you pay for. There are plenty of consumer magazines that will tell you how wonderful the $300 scanners are. Of course if you have a cheap printer a lousy scan will look just great.

The purpose of FLAAR is to try to assist people before they made a decision.

FLAAR is non-profit and is deluged with tragic stories of people who bought the wrong equipment. If you believed the ads now you know why we are so harsh on the companies that utilize this clever means to lure you to buy their equipment.

Cheap desktop printers fall apart eventually; their software is generally inadequate. You gradually achieve the awareness that the printer you received was merely a machine for soaking up expensive ink and paper. Yet these printers serve a useful purpose, you get some training in digital imaging. Nonetheless you waste your money because you could get even better practice with a serious wide format printer.

When you wish to bury the past mistakes and move onward and upward to serious wide format printers, we will be glad to assist you. Wide format printers start at about $5000; a serious wide format printer is about $12,000, good enough for professional use yet easy enough for a first time user. We cover 24" wide format printers and upward. We can even suggest places you can order your printer for personal home delivery. That's right, an actual human being will bring the printer to your house, will unpack it, set everything up, connect it to your computer, and actually show you how to produce museum-quality photo-realistic prints.

Our reviews of flatbed scanners cover Heidelberg scanners and above (circa $2000 and up). Do you need a drum scanner? Probably not, we can recommend plenty of medium priced scanners that will do a good job, but no, we do not review HP scanners, nor do we recommend Microtek nor their clones (such as Agfa, which are manufactured by Microtek).

Due to the avalanche of requests, however, we ask you to fill out the provisional inquiry form now available on all three web sites so we can attend to your request for assistance. Please keep in mind, our sites are called wide format printer and large format printer for a good reason, this is the subject that we cover. We do not cover desktop format printers.

We now have new reports on: *RIPs for large format printers* and an enhanced version, *RIPs + basic help for first-time-users*. Although we can't repair a RIP you already have, we can suggest a better RIP that hopefully will not cause as many technical problems.
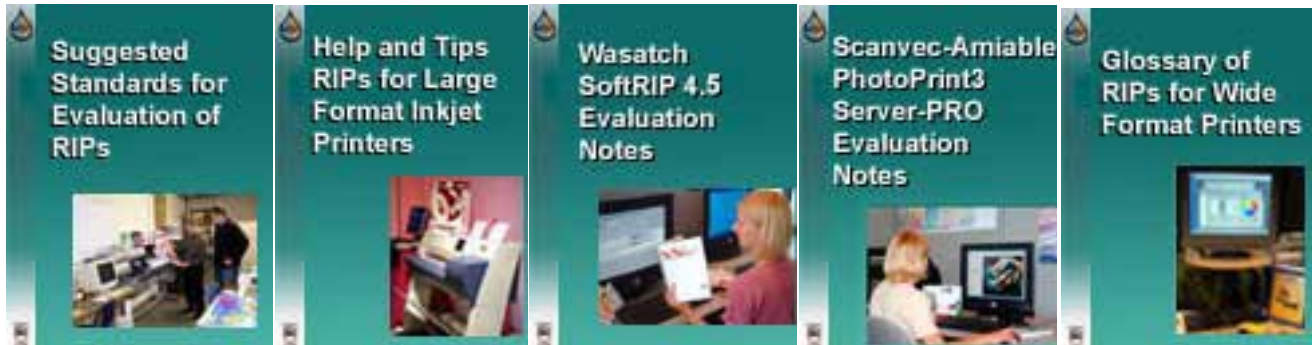
FLAAR has reports on media + inks; on piezo vs thermal printhead large format printer systems, on what printers are best for doing dye sublimation printing for heat transfer to do T-shirts, coffee mugs, ceramic tiles, even aluminum.

Just back to our web sites; track down the provisional inquiry form, drag-and-drop it into your e-mail; fill it out, and let us know what reports you would like from us.

The following reports are being made available in instant PDF download format directly from the FLAAR web sites.

Reports themselves and this list prepared by Nicholas Hellmuth, FLAAR, sent to you by the staff of the Digital Imaging Technology Center, Francisco Marroquin University.

www.wide-format-printers.org	www.fineartgicleeprinters.org	**CLICK HERE TO VIEW EACH FLAAR NETWORK SITE**
www.digital-photography.org	www.flatbed-scanner-review.org	
www.laser-printer-reviews.org	www.cameras-scanners-flaar.org	www.large-format-printers.org
www.FLAAR.org	www.ctpid.ufm.edu.gt	www.wide-format-printers.NET

Please realize that all reports are in Adobe Acrobat PDF format. The reader software is free from www.adobe.com/products/acrobat/readstep2.html.
PDF files are intended to be read on your computer monitor. Naturally you can print them if you wish, but if the photographic images within the reports were high enough dpi for a 1200 dpi laser printer it would not be possible to download them. So the images are intended to be at monitor resolution, naturally in full color. FLAAR itself makes the files available only in PDF format because that is the international standard. We have no mechanism to print them out and mail them.
Obviously if you have d☐
handle a basic PDF file.

Acquire these reports at:
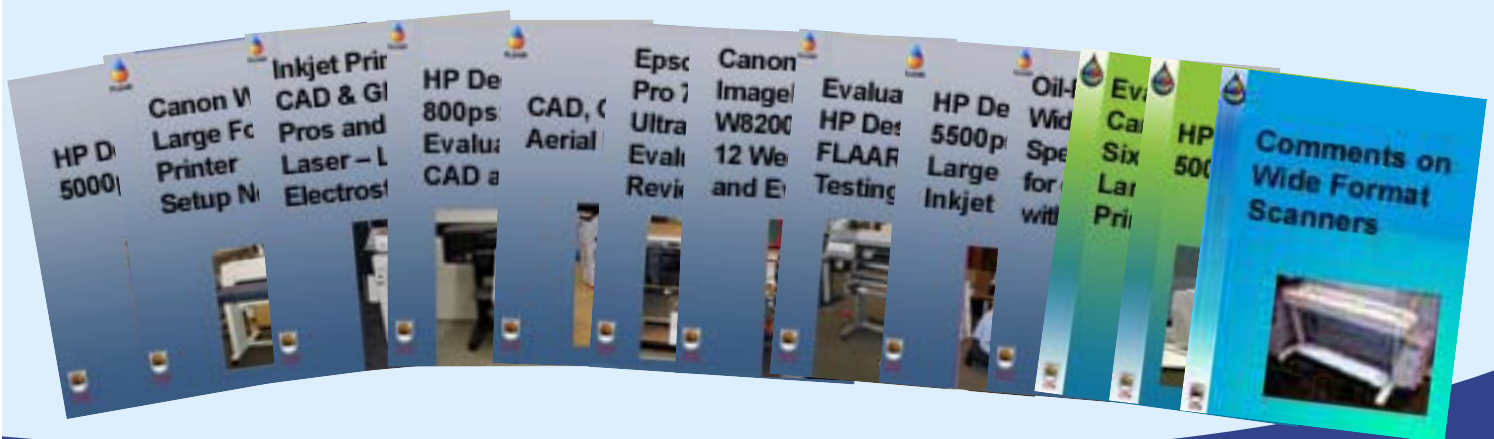
www.wide-format-printers.net

Color Management Series

Book Review of Public Color Ma...

Color Ma... for Wide Digital Im...

Glossary of on Color Management wide format digital cam... and scanne...

Gretag Eye One Review

Color Mana... with... PROF...

Step-By-Step Guide to Color Management

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Comm... On Lo... Archi...

Thermal... Piezo Printhead...

Price F... For Wi... Inkjet...

Standard Printer Evaluation...

Quest... Before purcha... Wide F... RIP or...

Survival

Wide... Inkje... Prin... App...

List of Wide Format Printers

CAD Series

HP D... 5000...

Canon W... Large Fo... Printer Setup N...

Inkjet Prin... CAD & GI... Pros and Laser – L... Electrost...

HP De... 800ps... Evalua... CAD a...

CAD, ... Aerial...

Epso... Pro 7... Ultra... Eval... Revi...

Canon... Imagel... W820... 12 We... and E...

Evalua... HP Des... FLAAR... Testing...

HP De... 5500p... Large Inkjet...

Oil-... Wid... Spe... for... with...

Ev... Ca... Six... La... Pri...

HP... 500...

Comments on Wide Format Scanners

These reports are grouped in these series, and can be ordered on www.wide-format-printers.NET

Acquire these reports at:

www.wide-format-printers.net

Wide Format Printers for Photo Exhibit Quality Series

UV - Curable Flatbed Inkjet Printers Series

Wide Format Printers for Signs Series

These reports are grouped in these series, and can be ordered on www.wide-format-printers.NET

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Solvent Ink Printers Series

Print for Pay Series