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Metrologic Focus Review

Product: Focus
Manufacturer: Metrologic
Type: 2D Imager
Support: Metrologic provides a two year, manufacturer warranty. POSGuys.com offers lifetime support.

The Metrologic Focus is a 2D Professional LED Flash Scanner that provides users with increased productivity for virtually all 1D and 2D bar code reading applications. As a 2D Imager it can read 2D barcodes, including the back of most drivers' licenses. When integrated with compatible software this makes age verification and recording personal information in retail environments fast and easy.

Typical uses and environments:

The Focus was designed to be used in retail and health care environments. Its first flash technology and omni-directional aiming make it great for covering all types of retail. The Focus uses the First Flash technology to get the fastest read by scanning practically every barcode on the first LED flash.

2D Imagers can be very helpful in health care where detailed information may be embedded into 2D barcodes, thus the Focus will work well for that environment. Because of the camera in the Focus, slightly damaged barcodes will have logic applied to them which makes it possible to get reads from damaged or poor quality barcodes. Additionally, the Focus can be used outside, as long as the barcodes were not in direct sunlight.

Unique Features & Advantages:

The Focus includes Linear Illumination; a slightly darker strip of red light that shows up before scanning to help aim. The Linear Illumination is controlled by a sensor and initiates when anything comes in front of the scanner to ensure an accurate read of the correct barcode, which is necessary for barcodes located close to each other.

The Focus also features First Flash technology with a flashing red light that helps scan barcodes without having to be perfectly lined up to the barcode. In many cases it will scan the barcode on the first flash regardless of angle or distance.

Multiple code select allows the Focus to read up to seven barcodes in one trigger pull. The flashes emitted from the scanner help to read more than one barcode at a time. It can also be programmed to output the data in the order that works for you.

The cables on the Focus are interchangeable. There is a pinhole that provides access to releasing the cable. Pushing a small pin or paperclip end into the pinhole releases the cable.

It can be programmed for seven different tones or for no beep at all. It can also program the depth of field the scanner reads for even faster reads.

The scanner is plug_and_play with Windows PCs. Once the cord is plugged in to the PC, Windows will auto-identify the scanner after which you can start scanning right away.

Standard Features:

A variety of standard features are included with the Metrologic Focus. It incorporates all of the typical features found within its class. Starting with a hands-free stand that uses a flexible goose neck to allow for a variety of angles and positioning. A hands-free stand is ideal for someone who wants to work with both hands and scan an item at the same time. Along with the stand and scanner, a coiled cable is also included in the box.

Rubberized areas on scanners are used to protect, not only the product itself, but also the merchandise being scanned. The Focus has rubber bumpers all around the front, side, and back of the head, and down through most of the handle.

Towards the back of the head is a strip of status lights that indicate different settings. The blue light indicates that the scanner has power. The white light flashes when a successful scan is completed, and the yellow light turns on when the scanner is in the stand. Next to the status lights sits the Metrologic Focus logo. In addition, "Metrologic" is engraved into the rubberized area on the top of the hood.

The buzzer's scan tone is moderately loud, which would be helpful in a noisy retail setting or outdoors. However, it is not too loud for a quiet retail or health care environment.

Drawbacks:

There are very few drawbacks with the Focus and these are minor details that do not distract from the functionality of the product.

There is no Quick Start Guide in the box to assist the buyer. You'll have to use the full configuration guide that comes with the scanner.

By default the Data matrix barcode is not enabled. A configuration barcode will have to be scanned to enable this symbology.

When attempting to scan a barcode, the Focus produces a strobe light effect with the LEDs that can become straining on the eyes. This would only really be an issue if you're using the scanner during extended periods of scanning in a dark location.

The Metrologic Focus does not have bumpers on the heel or bottom of the handle.

Performance Testing:

The testing was done in an indoor setting with fluorescent lighting. The brightness test is done using a 250W halogen spotlight. Our tests include reading barcode density and width, damaged or worn barcodes, scan range, light resistance and durability. We found the Focus's performance to be slightly above average for its class.

In ideal conditions, the range of the scanner is about 1 inch to 12 inches. It was inconsistent prior to 1 inch, but would sometimes read from contact. The Focus does well when scanning all 2D barcodes. It also read scratched, worn, and warped barcodes easily. It was able to read barcodes that were on a curved surface as well. The brightness of that distance is about 500,000w/m^2, which is equivalent to full staged lighting focused on the barcode. Regarding multiple barcodes in close proximity, it would sometimes scan a barcode outside the aiming beam.
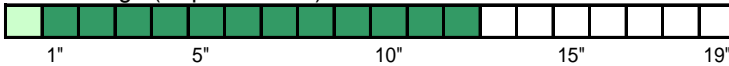
During testing, we noticed the biggest advantage of the Focus was its ability to read the high density barcodes. It read the highest density barcode we had available up to the 8mm density barcode. The range of the density test was well above average for retail scanners.

We found that the biggest shortcoming of the Focus was its durability. While testing for durability, the Focus survived the 3' drops, but broke after the third 6' drop. To remain consistent with the tests already performed on other scanners, we dropped the Focus without its interface cord. Metrologic does not recommend this, as it may decrease structural stability.

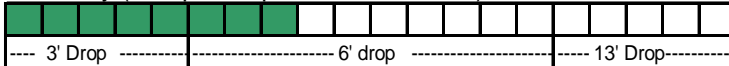A breakdown of the Metrologic Focus capabilities is listed in table and graph form below.

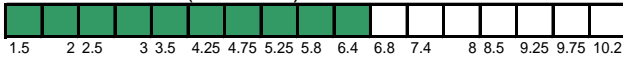## Scanner Performance Testing

Scan Range (Depth of Field)

1"   5"   10"   15"   19"

From Contact to 1", the Focus was inconsistent.
The overall successful range was from 1" - 12".

Durability (Multiple Drop Tests to Concrete)

---- 3' Drop ---------- ---------------------- 6' drop ---------------------- ----- 13' Drop-----------
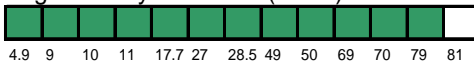
Survived 5 drops from 3' and 3 drops from 6'.
Dropped without cable, contrary to Metrologic's
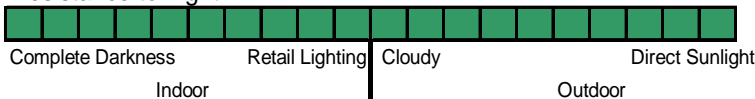recommendation for increased structural stability.

Wide Barcodes (In Inches)

1.5   2 2.5   3 3.5   4.25 4.75 5.25 5.8   6.4   6.8   7.4   8 8.5   9.25 9.75 10.2

Successfully read barcodes up to 5.8" wide,
which is above average for retail scanners.

High Density Barcodes (In Mil)

4.9 9   10   11   17.7 27   28.5 49   50   69   70   79   81

Read the small 5mil density barcode to 79mil.
Performed above average for retail use.

Resistance to Light

Complete Darkness   Retail Lighting Cloudy   Direct Sunlight
        Indoor   Outdoor

Fully light immune

1D Results

Highest Density Barcode Scanned	5mil	Great
Widest Barcode Scanned	147.32mm	Great
Shortest Barcode Scanned	38mm	Great
Range Ideal Conditions (Standard 100% UPC-A)	1 inches – 12 inches	Good
Scratched Barcode	3 of 3	Good
Worn Barcode	2 of 2	Good
Warped Barcode	2 of 2	Good
Curved Barcode	2 of 2	Good
Multiple Barcodes in close proximity	Relatively accurate, but dependent on thickness of barcode relative to thickness of beam	Average
Scan through plastic layers	8 Layers	Great
Multicolored Barcodes Successfully Scanned	Blue, Grey	Good
Multicolored Barcodes Not Scanned	Red, Yellow, Black on Dark Grey	Average
Simulated Sunlight Test	Correct scans until spotlight was at 0"	Excellent

Conclusion:
The Metrologic Focus is a good barcode scanner that is fast and reliable. It has many unique features that make it convenient to use. The Focus would be a great choice for medium and high volume retail environments and health care. The Focus has 2D capabilities for anyone interested in incorporating security, customer validation, or other uses of 2D barcodes. Even if you do not need 2D capabilities, the First Flash feature and aggressive scan engine make it a good choice for high volume settings.

To Purchase this product, go to the Metrologic Focus page.

To see our complete line of barcode scanners, visit our Barcode Scanners section.

For Additional Reviews, visit our Product Reviews page.

Metrologic Scanners	Ideal Setting	Description
Metrologic Focus	Medium to High Volume Retail & Health Care	A 2D Imager with omnidirectional scanning and has the second best pricing in its class
Metrologic Fusion	High Volume Retail	An omnidirectional scanner with option of handheld and includes code gate technology.
Metrologic Focus BT	High Volume Retail, Health Care, & Light Industrial	The Focus BT adds Wireless Bluetooth to 130 feet and includes code gate and range gate technology.
Metrologic Voyager	Medium to High Volume Retail	A mid-level scanner with a lower price than the Focus that provides auto sense technology and comes with a stand.

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