

# Great Scott!

By Scott Goodman



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## Your NEXT Embroidery Machine

Confused about all of the technology and options? Let me break it down for you. I have categorized embroidery technology into five distinct groups, or generations. All current models fit into one of these groups. Let me take you down memory lane (cue the music).

Twenty-ish years ago, embroidery machines had small LCD screens with pudgy pixels that limited their depth of information. Blobs, lots of blobs of inky darkness indicated your memory card-based design selection. Like a Rorschach panel...was it two dancing bears or a butterfly? Only one design element could be embroidered.

Sometimes embroidering a name required unhooping and rehooping with limited accuracy. Nostalgia brings a tear to my eye.

Second generation machines appeared 4-5 years later. Screens were still monochromatic (black & white), but pixels were smaller, showing greater detail, and several elements could be placed on-screen with great accuracy. Your composition could be repeated ad infinitum/ad nauseum depending on your design sense.

Third generation (circa 2000) is where our beloved art form attained critical mass. Manufacturers broke away from pre-programmed \$150 design cards. Floppy disks and serial connections (remember those) allowed downloading from CD-Roms and the burgeoning internet. Now, newer versions use USB connections and thumb drives. Free design sites started our addiction to design collections. We can never get enough. These cool machines rocked high-resolution WYSIWYG\* color screens. (\*what you see is what you get)

Today, most top-of-the-line brands are fourth generation. Automatic jump-stitch trimming! Can I get an A-men from the choir? Some of us still have to stop our machine, mid-design, to trim those "spider-webby, connect-the-dot" jump stitches before they get buried under fill-stitches. Sure, machines get faster; hoops get larger; and screens get bigger. But, those are not generational changes.

Fifth Generation? Optical recognition. So far, two brands have it. Design placement is instant. We know that many projects challenge our patience by resisting when we attempt accurate hooping. Now, you can place a registration sticker on your hooped project. These new machines find the mark and orient your design exactly where you choose. Wait...it gets better! With a touch of an icon, a built-in camera scans your hoopage and takes a picture. The hoop-shot (a trademark of Great Scott) appears as the background of your design editing screen. The embroidery design is superimposed ON YOUR PROJECT! Your design can be virtually moved, rotated, resized and positioned. You see your project as it will be in the future. Imagine trying to place a design accurately on the tip of a collar or trying to accurately embroider a pocket, ribbon, whatever. Our latest multi-needle dream machines integrate some of these features, too.

While I have my own favorite machines, I have asked owners of my least favorite brands and models what they like about their embroider-babies. Number one response? (survey says...) "I like the support/classes that my dealer offers". All of the top-of-the-line brands are ultra-reliable. The differences brand-to-brand are minimal when you compare the same generation models. The cool dealers offer a warm, creative learning environment. In-store embroidery clubs enable you to hang out with your like-minded embroider-buddies. Our club features show-and-tell. Our members bring their successes and their oopsies, too. Sympathy and comedy relief never hurt.

When is the best time to buy? When it comes to technology, you gotta jump into the deep-end of the pool. Use it and enjoy it now. You can always upgrade or trade up when technology gives us generation six.

What features would you like to see in your next machine? Write me a note. [GreatScott@gmail.com](mailto:GreatScott@gmail.com)