

TOP 10 FLAT-PANEL DISPLAYS

Details	Last month's position	First reviewed	Price (ex VAT)	Warranty	Screen size	Maximum resolution	Pixel pitch	Dimensions (width x depth x height)	Weight	Digital connector	USB ports
1 LG Flatron LCD 782LE 0870 607 5544 www.lge.co.uk	NEW	Apr 02	£502	3-year	17in	1,280x1,024	0.26mm	399x235x427mm	7.3kg	Y	2
2 Sharp LL-T15V1 0161 205 2333 www.sharp.co.uk	NEW	Apr 02	£299	3-year	15in	1,024x768	0.30mm	340x167x322mm	4.4kg	N	N
3 LG Flatron LCD 882LE 0870 607 5544 www.lge.co.uk	1	Feb 02	£749	3-year	18.1in	1,280x1,024	0.28mm	434x235x443mm	9kg	Y	4
4 Philips 170B2B 020 869 2166 www.philips.co.uk	NEW	Apr 02	£615	3-year	17in	1,280x1,024	0.26mm	446x181x471mm	8kg	Y	4
5 Eizo FlexScan L685 01483 719 505 www.eizo.co.uk	NEW	Apr 02	£989	3-year	18.1in	1,280x1,024	0.28mm	399x404x203mm	8kg	Y	4
6 NEC MultiSync LCD1830 0845 121 9200 www.nec-monitors.com	2	Jan 01	£729	3-year	18.1in	1,280x1,024	0.28mm	435x215x449mm	8.5kg	N	N
7 NEC MultiSync LCD1550M 0845 121 9200 www.nec-monitors.com	NEW	Apr 02	£389	3-year	15in	1,024x768	0.30mm	345x363x162mm	4.5kg	N	4
8 Hansol H530 01252 360 400 www.hansol-uk.com	NEW	Apr 02	£349	3-year	15in	1,024x768	0.30mm	358x127x346mm	4kg	N	N
9 Taxan CrystalVision 780 01344 484 646 www.taxan.co.uk	3	Oct 01	£749	3-year	17.4in	1,280x1,024	0.27mm	450x245x455mm	10.4kg	N	4
10 Hitachi CML170 01628 643 315 www.hitachi.co.uk	4	Oct 01	£649	3-year	17in	1,280x1,024	0.26mm	424x178x436mm	6.5kg	N	N

1 LG Flatron LCD 782LE

The price premium associated with owning a sleek, space-saving flat-panel display compared to a bulky CRT (cathode ray tube) model has been shrinking rapidly, and LG's 782LE is one such example of this. The 17in screen offers a maximum resolution of 1,280x1,024 with a 150-degree viewing angle. In addition to the traditional analogue Dsub connector you'll also find support for DVI (digital visual interface). DVI offers a completely digital route from the graphics card to the display, eliminating image degradation due to analogue/digital conversion. The thin frame around the screen means it takes up no more space than is necessary and the built-in mains adapter means that you can plug it straight in to the wall without having to use a separate device.

The LG Flatron's OSD (onscreen display) is easy to navigate, should you have to make any image adjustments. The screen provides a good colour palette with pin-sharp image definition. There's also a two-port USB hub, providing a convenient point to plug in any peripherals, without delving around the back of your PC. The LG's killer feature, however, is its £502 price tag. It may be more than a CRT, but it's a small price to pay for a sleek, space-saving display.

2 Sharp LL-T15V1

While a 17in flat-panel offers the same viewing area as a 19in CRT (cathode ray tube) monitor, a 15in panel is comparable with a 17in CRT model. Again, there's still a price premium but it's decreasing dramatically. Sharp's LL-T15V1 may not be the most feature-packed model, but what it does provide it does well. So while there's no DVI (digital visual interface) connector, USB hub or pivot functionality (the increasingly popular ability to rotate the screen 90 degrees into portrait position), the image quality is good and well defined. The thin frame around the screen makes for a compact unit, and it offers a maximum resolution of 1,024x768 with a 160-degree viewing angle. The OSD (onscreen display) for the menu options isn't the easiest to use, but it's fine once you get used to it.

The LL-T15V1 may not be the most feature-packed flat-panel display, but it fulfils the core requirements of a stylish TFT (thin film transistor) screen admirably. For £299, the Sharp is a proficient and affordable model.



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3 LG Flatron LCD 882LE

At first glance, £749 seems rather a high price to pay for a flat-panel. However, the LG Flatron LCD 882LE is an 18.1in model – a screen that, in reality, offers a greater viewing area than a 19in CRT (cathode ray tube) monitor.

The LG is slim and lightweight with a dainty frame that will consume surprisingly little of your desk space. Hardware specifications, including a 160-degree viewing angle and 0.28mm dot pitch, for example, are standard but more than capable. Although the maximum resolution of 1,280x1,024 seems a waste of such a large screen, you'll be hard pressed to find an 18.1in display that beats it.

**4** Philips 170B2B

The Philips 170B2B is a 17in model with a 160-degree viewing angle. The display stretches to 1,280x1,024 and it supports both Dsub and DVI (digital visual interface) connections. With a rich colour palette and good intensity, the 170B2B is pleasant to use.

The base offers a four-port USB hub, plus a couple of integrated speakers and a microphone. The microphone is a bonus for video-conferencing. It also supports pivot, allowing you to rotate the display into portrait mode, with software to electronically rotate the view for you. At £615 the 170B2B has everything you need.

**5** Eizo FlexScan L685

Judged on features, design and performance alone, the Eizo FlexScan is a superb display. At 18.1in, the screen seems vast, which is emphasised by the thin frame. The L685 can not only pivot, but can be adjusted vertically so you can ensure that it's in just the right position for you. There's a four-port USB hub and the colours are intense with extremely good image definition. The only down side is that at £989 it is more than most people want to spend.

**6** NEC MultiSync LCD1830

The MultiSync's 18.1in flat-panel boasts a picture equivalent to a 19.5in CRT (cathode ray tube) display. Hardware specifications are impressive, and include a



160-degree viewing angle, 0.28mm dot pitch and 300:1 contrast ratio. Text definition is needle sharp and the gorgeous colour palette is a visual treat. NEC's disappointing case construction is more a minor flaw than a reason not to buy, while the LCD1830's £729 asking price rivals those of the top 17.4in models. This vibrant and versatile screen manages to stand out in a competitive market.

7 NEC MultiSync LCD1550M

The 15in 1550M is a neat design, once you've got it set up. Unfortunately, however, assembling it proves fiddly work, but when you've got all the cables neatly threaded through the right places it's all hidden behind a cover. There are two speakers at the bottom of the MultiSync's display, which is a nice touch, and there's a four-port USB hub – with the added benefit of being at the side rather than the back for easy access. The NEC MultiSync's OSD (onscreen display) is a little overcomplicated, but the £389 price tag is reasonable for what's on offer.

**8** Hansol H530

The H530 offers a 15in display with a maximum resolution of 1,024x768. The unit is a basic model, with no extras like a USB hub, pivot support or integrated speakers. There's no DVI (digital visual interface) connector, with only analogue on offer. The OSD (onscreen display) is intuitive and easy to navigate, so it's simple to make adjustments. While the Hansol's image quality is reasonable, the strength of the competition means this £349 model has to settle for eighth place.

**9** Taxan CrystalVision 780

Monitor stalwart Taxan has produced a competent 17.4in flat-panel display for under £750. The Taxan includes a second RGB port, but no DVI (digital visual interface). Hardware features – including a pixel pitch of 0.27mm, maximum resolution of 1,280x1,024 with a refresh rate of 75Hz – are good, but it's the Taxan's image quality that truly impresses.

**10** Hitachi CML170

The attractive midnight-blue Hitachi CML170 makes an instant impression. The slimmed-down 6.5kg – making it the lightest of the 17in models – is partly due to the lack of advanced hardware features. The absence of a digital connector is also disappointing. The colourful menu system is good, as is the extensive setup options that let you fine-tune the screen to near-perfection. Graphically, the Hitachi CML170 is excellent, but text definition isn't as good.

