

TOP 10 MONITORS

17in Monitors		Last month's position	First reviewed	World-Bench 4	Warranty	Tube type/ tube technology	Viewable area	Dot pitch	Max resolution @ 75Hz	Max resolution	Weight	Dimensions	USB down-stream	Speakers	Dual ports	sRGB	Power	Antiglare coating	Environmental compliance	DVI/BNC connectors	Mac-compatible	OPQ or equivalent	
	1 Iiyama Vision Master Pro 413 01438 745 482 www.iiyama.co.uk	1	Feb 02	£185	3-year onsite	Aperture grille/ Diamondtron M2	16in	0.25mm	1,600x1,200	1,600x1,200	16.5kg	408x430x420mm	N	N	N	Y	110W	Y	TCO 99	N/N	Y	Y	
	2 Mitsubishi Diamond Pro 740SB 0845 121 9200 www.mitsubishi-monitors.com	NEW	Apr 02	£195	3-year onsite	Aperture grille/ Diamondtron M2	16in	0.25mm	1,600x1,200	1,600x1,200	19kg	399x415x413mm	N	N	N	Y	95W	Y	TCO 99	N/N	Y	Y	
	3 Samsung SyncMaster 757DFX 0800 521 652 www.samsungelectronics.co.uk	NEW	Apr 02	£156	3-year onsite	Shadow mask/ DynaFlat	16in	0.24mm	1,600x1,200	1,600x1,200	17kg	398x415x413mm	N	N	N	Y	80W	Y	TCO 99	N/N	Y	N	
	4 CTX PR711F 01923 810 800 www.ctxmonitors.com	NEW	Apr 02	£218	3-year onsite	Aperture grille/ Trinitron	16in	0.24mm	1,600x1,200	1,600x1,200	1.7.6kg	412x425x415mm	Y	N	N	Y	100W	Y	TCO 99	N/N	Y	N	
	5 CTX EX710F 01923 810 800 www.ctxmonitors.com	2	May 01	£139	3-year onsite	Shadow mask/ FST	16in	0.25mm	1,600x1,200	1,600x1,200	16.5kg	412x415x417mm	N	N	N	Y	100W	Y	TCO 99	N/N	Y	N	
19in Monitors																							
	1 CTX PR960F 01923 810 800 www.ctxmonitors.com	3	Apr 02	£283	3-year onsite	Aperture grille/ FD Trinitron	18in	0.24mm	1,600x1,200	1,600x1,200	26kg	406x469x485mm	Y	N	N	Y	125W	Y	TCO 99	N/Y	Y	N	
	2 LG Flatron 915FT Plus 01753 500 470 www.lge.com	2	Apr 02	£265	3-year onsite	Slot pitch/ LG Flatron	18in	0.24mm	1,600x1,200	1,600x1,200	26.5kg	470x470x480mm	Y	N	N	Y	140W	Y	TCO 99	N/Y	Y	N	
	3 Iiyama Vision Master Pro 454 014 38 745 482 www.iiyama.co.uk	EXCLUSIVE	NEW	Apr 02	£293	3-year onsite	Aperture grille/ Diamondtron M2	18in	0.25mm	1,600x1,200	1,920x1,440	24kg	450x447x450mm	Y	Y	Y	Y	138W	Y	TCO 99	N/N	Y	Y
	4 NEC MultiSync FP955 0845 121 9200 www.nec.co.uk	NEW	Apr 02	£349	3-year onsite	Aperture grille/ Diamondtron NF	18in	0.24mm	1,600x1,200	1,600x1,440	23kg	442x445x449mm	N	N	Y	Y	120W	Y	TCO 99	Y/N	Y	N	
	5 Sony CPD-E430 0870 542 4424 www.sony-cp.com	NEW	Apr 02	£319	3-year onsite	Aperture grille/ FD Trinitron	18in	0.24mm	1,600x1,200	1,600x1,200	25.5kg	451x461x471mm	N	N	N	Y	135W	Y	TCO 99	N/N	Y	N	

TOP 10 17in MONITORS

1 Iiyama Vision Master Pro 413

Even with three new entries in the Top 10 17in monitors chart this month, none could snatch the top spot from Iiyama's excellent Vision Master Pro 413. Though not the cheapest screen around, it's reasonably priced and comes with top-notch specifications.

Compared to flat-panel displays, prices of CRT (cathode ray tube) monitors are very low, but their bulky size makes them a less attractive option than their slimline alternatives. However, the Iiyama has plenty going for it, as this is the third month running that it has held on to our Best Buy award. With plenty of enticing features, the Iiyama Vision Master Pro 413 might just persuade buyers to stick with a CRT screen.

Most notable is the inclusion of Mitsubishi's Diamondtron M2 technology, a new tube type capable of producing enhanced levels of brightness at the touch of a switch. For most applications you'll want to retain the more familiar subdued tones, but many users will relish the ability to boost levels of brightness during an important presentation or DVD movie. This high brightness feature is easy to operate, and turning it on and off certainly proved easier than perfecting the image onscreen.



← Despite several new entries to the chart the Iiyama Vision Master Pro 413 hangs on to its Best Buy award

On our Windows XP test PC, switching resolutions frequently required us to make significant changes using the fiddly setup options. The resolution support itself is good, although the screen didn't offer the clearest of images at the top resolution of 1,600x1,200. However, you probably won't want to run a 17in screen at a resolution above 1,280x1,024, and within these restrictions, the Pro 413 is extremely good.

The Vision Master Pro's colours are fresh and vibrant, even without the high brightness setting on, and text definition is clinical, which clinches it our Best Buy against tough competition from the newcomers.

2 Mitsubishi Diamond Pro 740SB

Mitsubishi pioneered the Diamondtron technology and puts it to good use in the Diamond Pro 740SB.

It might not be the cheapest CRT (cathode ray tube) model on the market, but anyone willing to pay a bit extra will be rewarded with one of the best 17in monitors we've seen.

The Diamond Pro's top resolution of 1,600x1,200 runs at a flicker-free 75Hz and the 0.25mm dot pitch ensures image quality



← The Mitsubishi Diamond Pro 740SB is an expensive 17in monitor, but its specifications and image-quality are excellent

is as good as it gets. But it's the make of tube that pushes the 740SB above the competition. Because of the way aperture grille monitors beam light on to the screen via a grid of metal wires, the results tend to be more colourful and brighter than shadow mask tube technology. Its Diamondtron M2 tube offers the same enhanced brightness option as the Iiyama at number one, which improves image quality even further and we were really impressed by its use in the Diamond Pro 740SB.

On the default settings the Mitsubishi's colours were vibrant and the display was sharp enough to cope with text at the highest resolution. If the image isn't bright enough for you, the SuperBright button can give it a boost.

The six-button control panel is extremely versatile – even offering horizontal and colour convergence. That said, we found correction controls to be fairly unnecessary because the Diamond Pro 740SB didn't really suffer from any problems. It's only the price that keeps it off the top slot.

3 Samsung SyncMaster 757DFX

The SyncMaster 757DFX might not offer the best picture quality, but the combination of a low price and a host of good features saw it narrowly beat the entry from CTX. As a budget option, this is one of the best monitors in the chart.

While the 0.24mm dot pitch and 1,600x1,200 at 75Hz resolution provided high-end credentials, the SyncMaster 757DFX was let down by the shadow mask tube. There was no problem with detailed text, but colours were a little subdued and lacked intensity.

Seven buttons for navigating the settings menu made things confusing initially, but every button is needed because the controls cover so many options. This was just as well because the SyncMaster did suffer from slight moiré patterns and ghosting, though these problems were easily eradicated.

We were impressed by the inclusion of colour calibration and MouScreen software, which lets you use the mouse to access and control all the onscreen menus.



↑ Samsung's SyncMaster 757DFX offers a low price, but the picture quality lacks intensity



4 CTX PR711F

The PR711F from CTX is undoubtedly an excellent monitor with great picture quality. Unfortunately, it can't match the low prices of the other contenders, so could only achieve fourth place in the chart. There's certainly nothing wrong with the specifications of the PR711F. The 0.24mm dot pitch and 1,600x1,200 resolution at 75Hz were combined with a Trinitron tube to produce a near-faultless picture quality.

↑ The CTX PR711F is the most expensive 17in monitor, which prevents it from climbing higher in the chart

The CTX features a USB hub on the base of the monitor, which provides four ports. If you can afford it and you've got lots of USB peripherals with nowhere to plug them in, then the PR711F might be for you.

The controls are overcomplicated considering it only has four navigation buttons and average functionality, but it works well after a few minutes orientation. Overall, the CTX PR711F would have scored a lot higher if the price had been lower, but it does have some benefits in its favour, such as the USB hub and excellent picture quality.

5 CTX EX710F

This month, we tested several new 17in monitors fresh on to the market, but they just weren't good enough to enter the chart. This is good news for the EX710F, which isn't budging. The former Best Buy has moved down a few places to fifth, but it's not out of the chart. A price drop to £139 certainly helped its cause.

In effect this is the budget version of the PR711F in fourth place. The Trinitron tube is replaced by a lesser FST (flatter squarer tube) shadow mask and there's no USB hub for plugging in extra devices.

The EX710F lacks the vibrant image quality of its more expensive sibling, the PR711F, and also misses the pinpoint accuracy of the latter's 0.24mm dot pitch. That said, 0.25mm dot pitch and a top resolution of 1,600x1,200 at 75Hz is still a good specification for the price. It's also fair to say that, while perhaps a little bright, the EX710F's picture quality is clean and easily rivals that of much of the competition.



↑ The CTX EX710F is the former Best Buy, but the excellent competition means it is left in last place in the chart

Cathode ray tube or flat-panel?

It shouldn't really come as a surprise that, in a poor 12 months for the PC industry, the flat-panel market has been one of the few standouts. Flat-panel displays aren't only light on bulk – the TFT (thin film transistor) equivalent of a 17in CRT monitor will pack just a third of the weight – but their slender casing makes them a far more appealing prospect than their chunky CRT counterparts. On a more practical level, you'll reclaim acres of desk space thanks to the TFT's small footprint.

It's not all good news though. Prices may have tumbled by over 50 percent in the last year, but it'll still cost you almost twice as much to treat yourself to a flat-panel. Expect to pay around £300 for a basic 15in model, stretching up to £750 for an 18.1in screen.

In contrast, a high calibre 17in CRT can be snapped up for about £175, while even a vast 19in model can be bought for well under £300. Because you can view the entire screen on a flat-panel (you lose at least an inch of the screen with CRTs), they are better value than they seem, but the asking price remains steep. Also, even the best flat-panels aren't as colourful as high-quality CRTs, although the difference is narrowing.

The extra desk space that you gain with a flat-panel may offset the high price, but if money is tight, you'll get a far better deal by sticking with CRT technology. On the other hand, the future is undoubtedly the flat-panel, and if you can afford one, you'll find beauty doesn't just run screen deep.

will reward its owner with a strong roster of features and a £265 price tag that, for some, may prove too tempting to resist.

EXCLUSIVE 3 Iiyama Vision Master Pro 454

New 19in monitors are few and far between, and it's a surprise to find the trusty CTX and LG screens topping the charts ahead of this latest model from Iiyama.



↑ The onboard speakers of the Iiyama Vision Master Pro 454 will save premium desk space

As with the 17in Vision Master Pro 413, the 454 boasts the new Diamondtron M2 tube and an ability to crank up the brightness, which results in an extremely versatile colour palette. The overall image quality doesn't quite match that of the CTX, NEC and LG monitors, but this screen is still easy on the eye.

The additional features are first-class, with the four USB ports being joined by onboard speakers – a modern touch, and a true space saver that'll prove invaluable if top audio quality isn't required.

You don't really need resolution support above 1,600x1,200 on a 19in monitor, but when that level of detail isn't enough, the 85Hz refresh rate at 1,920x1,440 makes this screen almost unique. The Iiyama has plenty to offer, but for the everyday user looking for value for money and first-class picture quality, the CTX and LG models just inch ahead.

4 NEC MultiSync FP955

Since joining forces with Mitsubishi in 2000, NEC's line of monitors has grown in stature. Less impressive, in a market of falling price tags, has

→ The high cost of the NEC MultiSync FP955 is not justified considering the lack of extra features



been the hiking up of the costs. With a hefty asking price of £349 – £84 more than the LG Flatron – the FP955 doesn't do enough to justify its position as the most expensive screen in the charts.

Not that there's much to fault about the monitor itself. The colourful and efficient menu system and 0.24mm dot pitch are welcome additions, and the fine graphics detail and mellow colour palette produce eye-catching results. Indeed, this is the perfect showcase for the sRGB standard that NEC-Mitsubishi has done more than any other company to promote.

But excellent as the FP955 is, it isn't noticeably superior in image quality to the CTX, and the lack of extra features – there are no USB or built-in speakers – only serves to highlight the injustice of its comparatively steep asking price.

5 Sony CPD-E430

The Sony struggles to match the image quality of its competitors. Even with much fine tuning of the colour settings, which are accessed through the utterly bewildering menu system, the overpowering palette is too dark and gloomy to shine.

The Sony has the same FD Trinitron tube and 0.24mm dot pitch as the CTX at the top of the chart, but sadly can't match it, and the lack of extras such as USB or speakers hardly helps. The resolution support runs up to 1,600x1,200, although the slightly below-par 75Hz refresh rate leaves it dropping behind in yet another department – albeit a less important one.

Sony products never come cheap, although the costly NEC manages to take the bite out of the E430's £319 price tag. In truth, the Sony would probably prove an acceptable purchase, but when other models offer a better quality at a reduced price tag, why compromise?



↑ The Sony CPD-E430 fails to match the quality of the monitors higher in the chart

TOP 10 19in MONITORS

1 CTX PR960F

The inexorable rise of the flat-panel display has left the CRT (cathode ray tube) monitor market looking rather stagnant in recent months. So much so that a price cut – and a slight change in our scoring system – has seen the CTX PR960F vault back to the Best Buy spot, 18 months after its first appearance in *PC Advisor*.

Equipped with a pixel-perfect 0.24mm dot pitch and the FD Trinitron tube, the CTX continues to show the way in terms of specification and image quality. The USB support and fast, if slightly elaborate, menu system are up to scratch. If you were being picky, you might complain that the CTX's resolution support, which is unable to stretch as far as 1,920x1,440, lags behind the likes of the Iiyama at number three. In truth though, you would need a 22in or 24in monitor to do justice to such a high resolution, and CTX's 85Hz refresh rate at 1,600x1,200 leaves it well positioned to deliver crisp output.

The sheer volume of Top 10 PCs using this monitor indicates that CTX has hit the right balance with the picture quality. The PR960F is equally adept at graphics and text, and the vibrant sRGB-compliant colour palette is striking.



↑ The CTX PR960F has moved from third place to the Best Buy position after a change in price and scoring

With its top specifications, balanced image quality and excellent all-round value for money, this remains very much a monitor in the ascendency.

2 LG Flatron 915FT Plus

Three new 19in monitors may be hitting the top five this month, but the tenacious LG does well to cling to its second spot.

The specification list bears a close resemblance to that of the CTX. The 0.24mm dot pitch and 1,600x1,200 resolution support at a refresh rate of 85Hz are among the similarities. USB support is present, which is always a welcome convenience. The comprehensive and clearly laid out menu system is far from typical, and the tiny touch-sensitive buttons lend the LG a distinctly futuristic feel.



Built around LG's own Flatron tube, the 915FT's colour palette is light and pleasant to watch, and the clear text output makes the monitor a perfect addition to the office. While never quite matching the visual appeal of the CTX or NEC models, the LG remains an assured monitor that

↔ With a low price tag and sturdy specification, the LG Flatron 915FT is a good buy