





FLAT-PANEL DISPLAYS AND GRAPHICS CARDS

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 CTX PV700 01923 810 800 www.cyx europe.com	NEW	Sep 02	£411	3-year	17in	1,280x1,024	0.26mm	438x447x166mm	7.5kg	N	N	
 2 NEC 1700V 0870 120 1160 www.nec.mitsubishi.com	NEW	Sep 02	£449	3-year	17in	1,280x1,024	0.26mm	434x437x220mm	6.2kg	N	N	
3 Sony SDM-S71 0870 511 1999 www.lge.co.uk	NEW	Sep 02	£609	3-year	17.1in	1,280x1,024	0.26mm	423x233x399mm	6.5kg	N	N	
4 Samsung SyncMaster 171P 0800 521 652 www.samsungelectronics.com	NEW	Sep 02	£605	3-year	17in	1,280x1,024	0.26mm	424x206x457mm	6.2kg	N	N	
5 LG Flatron LCD 782LE 0870 607 5544 www.lge.co.uk	1	Apr 02	£469	3-year	17in	1,280x1,024	0.26mm	399x235x427mm	7.3kg	Y	2	
Graphics cards												
Details	Last month's position	First reviewed	Price (ex VAT)	Warranty	Graphics processor	Installed RAM	DDR RAM	Ramdac	4xAGP	Maximum resolution@ refresh rate	Colours@ 800x600	DVI
 1 Chaintek GeForce4 MX A-G441 0870 748 1468 www.chaintek.dk	1	Aug 02	£107	2-year	nVidia GeForce4 MX 440	64MB	Y	350MHz	Y	2,048x1,536 @75Hz	16.7 million	N
 2 Gainward GeForce3 Ti/450 Golden Sample 0870 220 0700 www.gainward.de	2	Apr 02	£110	3-year	nVidia GeForce3 Titanium 200	64MB	Y	350MHz	Y	2,048x1,536 @75Hz	16.7 million	N
3 Gainward GeForce4 Ultra/700 XP Golden Sample 0870 220 0700 www.gainward.de	3	Jul 02	£210	3-year	nVidia GeForce4 Ti 4400	128MB	Y	350MHz	Y	2,048x1,536 @75Hz	16.7 million	Y
4 ATI Radeon 8500 01628 477 788 www.ati.com	5	Jan 02	£212	3-year	ATI Radeon 8500	64MB	Y	400MHz	Y	2,048x1,536 @85Hz	16.7 million	Y
5 Visiontek Xtasy GeForce4 Ti 4600 01844 261 872 www.visiontek.com	RE-ENTRY	Jun 02	£255	lifetime	nVidia GeForce4 Ti 4600	128MB	Y	350MHz	Y	2,048x1,536 @75Hz	16.7 million	Y

FLAT-PANEL DISPLAYS

1 CTX PV700

The new PV700 from CTX doesn't have the extras of some of its competitors and its specifications are lower, but when it comes to what really matters – good visual display and value for money – it's way ahead of its peers.

The PV700 has an optimal resolution of 1,280x1,024 at 60Hz and a 0.26mm dot pitch. The 120-degree viewing angle means it's hard for more than one viewer to get a good look at the screen but that one person has a treat in store – this model offers a display comparable to flat-panels twice the price. It copes well with sharp text and the colour reproduction on DVD playback is very accurate.

The casing is plain and there are no extras like a USB hub or speakers. The big plus point with this 17in model, though, is its price. CTX is only charging £411 in a market where most models are at least £500, making this one of the best bargains we've seen. If you're thinking of buying a flat-panel hesitate no longer: this is the one you should get.



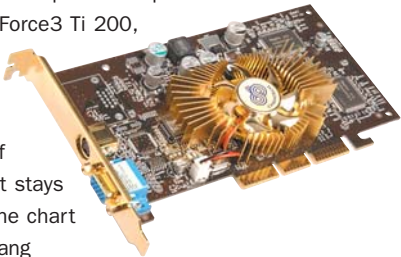
GRAPHICS CARDS

1 Chaintek GeForce4 MX A-G441

After taking the Graphics card chart by storm back in the August issue, Taiwanese company Chaintek keeps its Best Buy crown for another month. The name may still be relatively new to the retail graphics card arena, but its lack of experience clearly hasn't held the company back.

Chaintek has stuck with the tried-and-tested nVidia chip in the GeForce4 MX A-G441, using the GeForce4 MX with 64MB of DDR (double data rate) RAM – a memory configuration that few GeForce4 MX cards will top. It only features a TV-out S-Video port, but the software bundle is impressive as it includes Aquanox and MDK. The GeForce4 MX 440 processor produced almost identical performance to a GeForce3 Ti 200, despite the reduced price tag.

In the all-important Quake III test, it managed a fantastic 159fps (frames per second) at a resolution of 1,024x768. Even in top resolutions, it stays close to the 50fps mark. Check out the chart next month to see if Chaintek can hang on to its award.



FLAT-PANEL DISPLAYS

2 NEC 1700V

Like the Best Buy CTX, this flagship 17in model from NEC lacks a decent feature base and extras, but it also sports a higher price tag. As a result it can't compete with CTX in the value for money but it has one of the best images we've seen on a 17in model. With its 1,280x1,024 at 60Hz and 0.26mm dot pitch, the 1700V yields visual quality way beyond the capabilities of the competition. The text display is deep and sharp while colour is excellent. There's no pixellation and DVD playback is exceptional. If you've got money to spend and you want the best in quality, then the NEC is the model for you.



3 Sony SDM-S71

The SDM-S71 may be a design classic, but the lack of a USB hub or DVI (digital visual interface) is disappointing, and the setup options aren't the most versatile. But if the Sony is lacking when it comes to accessories and menu options, it certainly succeeds in terms of specification. Image quality is excellent, using the crisp colour palette to bring the most static pictures to life. Better still is the text reproduction, with well-defined characters and clean background.



4 Samsung SyncMaster 171P

Samsung enlisted the help of Ferdinand Porsche to design its latest model, resulting in a sturdy and durable flat-panel with an attractive textured casing and refined curves. The menu options, however, aren't quite as pleasing and without screen resize keys it is difficult to use the whole of the screen area in anything other than full 1,280x1,024 mode. There is no USB connection, although the DVI (digital visual interface) connector ensures compatibility for the future. Images are always realistic and detailed, but we found the text reproduction lacking clarity.



5 LG Flatron LCD 782LE

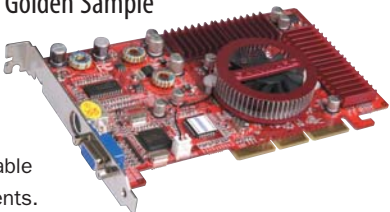
The LG Flatron's 17in screen offers a maximum resolution of 1,280x1,024 with a 150-degree viewing angle. It provides a good colour palette with pin-sharp image definition. In addition to the traditional analogue Dsub connector you'll also find support for DVI (digital visual interface), which eliminates image degradation due to analogue/digital conversion, and a two-port USB hub, providing a convenient point to plug in any peripherals.



GRAPHICS CARDS

2 Gainward GeForce3 Ti/450 Golden Sample

Our former Best Buy, the Gainward GeForce3 Ti, stays at number two this month as it manages to combine a reasonable price with high-quality components. Employing the mid-range GeForce3 Titanium 200 graphics processor, this card delivers sizzling speed, easily reaching 120fps (frames per second) at a resolution of 1,024x768. Even under the most demanding circumstances you'll find it continues to hug the 50fps mark. The hardware specifications are also impressive with 64MB of DDR (double data rate) RAM and a TV-out port included. However, the lack of a DVI (digital visual interface) is disappointing.



3 Gainward GeForce4 Ultra/700 XP Golden Sample

German graphics giant Gainward holds out at number three with the Ultra/700 XP. The Golden Sample rating is a sign that the GeForce4 has passed the most rigorous tests and is capable of running at top speeds. Gainward has opted for the Ti 4400 chip rather than the top-of-the-range 4600, but this makes little difference in practice: it produced a searing 181fps (frames per second) in our Quake III tests at a resolution of 1,024x768. The 128MB of RAM is also a sign that this card can compete at the highest level. Even though £245 makes this one of the cheaper GeForce4 cards, it's still a lot of money.



4 ATI Radeon 8500

ATI moves up one place to number four this month due to the discontinuation of the Creative 3D Blaster GeForce3 Titanium 200. The Radeon 8500 has been anchored in our chart since January and is the only graphics card that doesn't feature nVidia architecture. The ATI offers a host of features including TruForm which breaks up surfaces into a number of smaller sections allowing graphics to be more detailed. However, the 8500's unstable performance, poor XP compatibility and £212 price tag means that it must be happy with its lower chart placing.



5 Visiontek Xtasy GeForce4 Ti 4600

This 128MB Visiontek Ti 4600 card managed some incredible frame rates. Topping 190fps (frames per second) at resolutions of 1,024x768 on Quake III, it stayed within 50fps of this figure at 1,600x1,200. We relished the efficient memory architecture, the astounding graphics detail and anti-aliasing. Overall, though, the Xtasy's price keeps it at number five.

