WORKING WITH MULTIPLE MONITORS

1 + 1 > 2 !

Got a spare monitor? Throw in a PCI video card and you could have a desktop that spreads across two monitors

Among the many little features introduced with Windows 98 is one that allows you to work with multiple monitors on one computer. Long available to Mac users, the inclusion of this option in Windows has allowed a vast number of computer users to enjoy its benefits.

The most obvious requirement for working with two monitors is the second monitor itself. You also need to have a second video card. Installation of the video card and configuring the PC for two monitors are the two main parts of this workshop.

The video card you use should either be the PCI or AGP kind (Note: There can be only one AGP card per computer). The older ISA type cannot be used because of design limitations—the ISA standard forces hardware to use certain fixed resources, while PCI and AGP assign resources dynamically.

Exercise Caution
As always, be careful when dealing with hardware. A screwdriver dropped on your keyboard will only send some junk characters to your screen, but a screwdriver dropped on the wrong place inside your computer might require you to do an unplanned upgrade.

WHY MULTIPLE MONITORS?

1 If you have a spare monitor, you can get it working alongside your present one, rather than get rid of it.

1 Two 14-inch monitors are cheaper than a 21-inch one, but together they give you approximately the same screen area.

1 Designers and digital artists will find it convenient to place toolbars and other stuff on one monitor, and the actual working document on the other.

1 You can browse the Net on one monitor and chat on another. Beats Alt+Tabbing between overlapping windows.

1 If you are working on a document and need to frequently refer to another, you can open your working document on one monitor, and the reference docu-
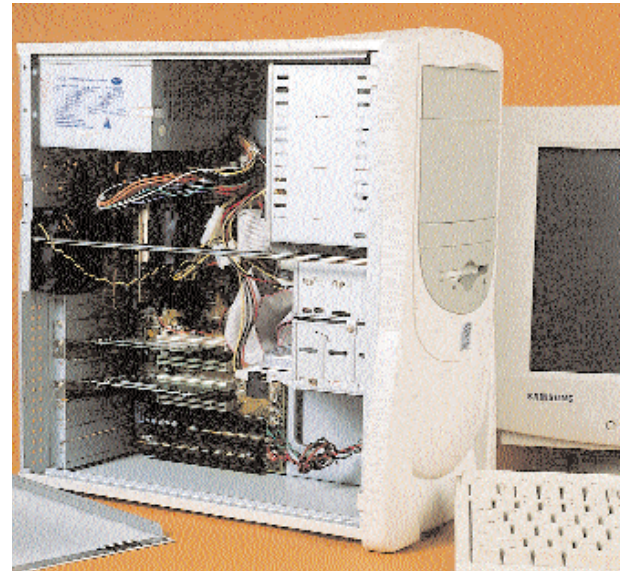
GETTING STARTED

What you need

4   A monitor and a video card (PCI or AGP; ISA will not do).

4   Windows 98. Older operating systems such as Windows 95 and Service Release-2 will not work.

4   A screwdriver for opening up your computer.

4   A spare screw for the video card. This is necessary to hold the card in place. You can probably source the screw from your computer itself.

4   A power cable for the monitor. If your existing monitor connects to the cabinet for power, you will need the type of cable that connects your
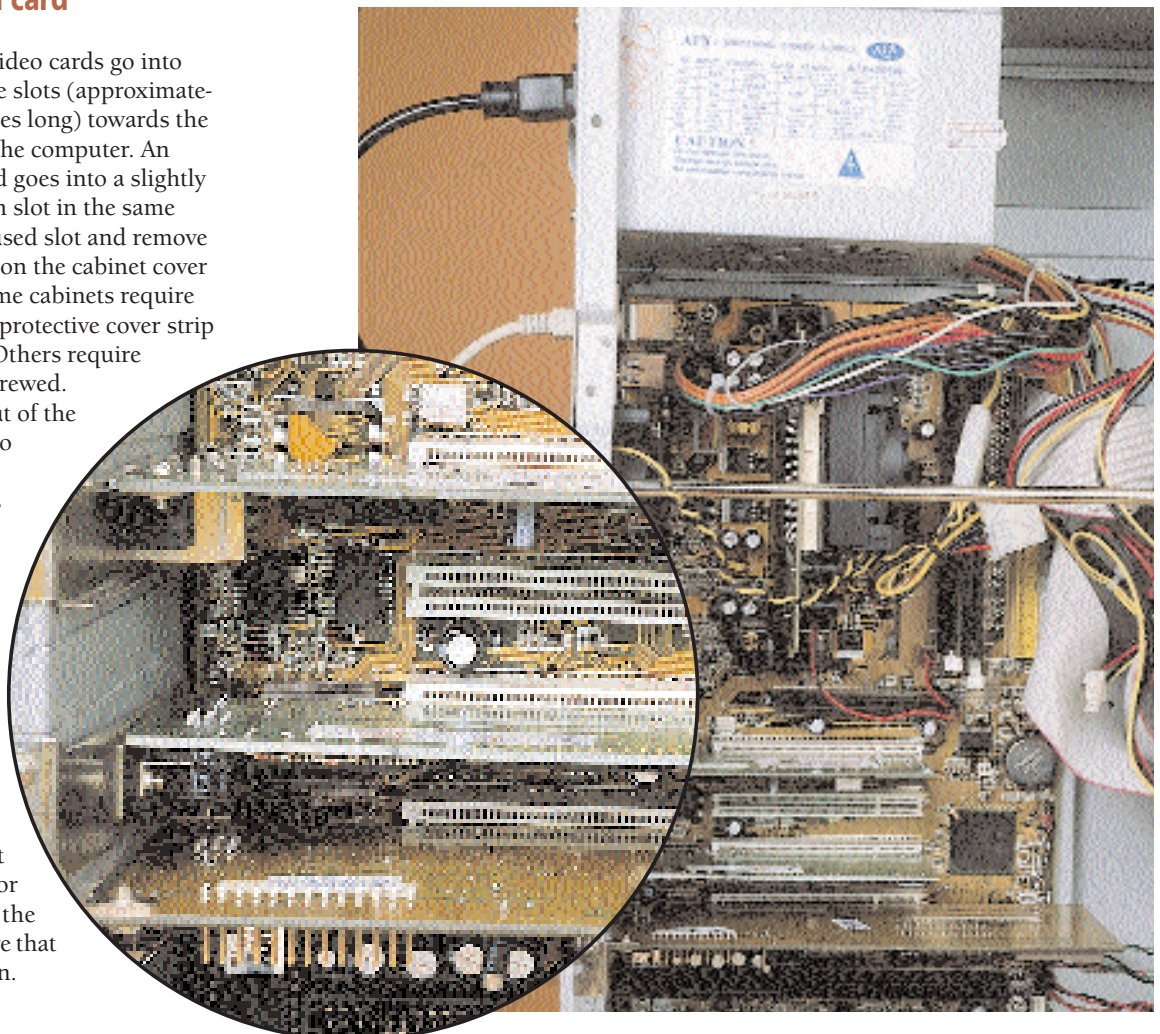
1 Getting under the cover

Turn 'off' your computer; touch the cabinet with your hands (this drains out any static electricity in your body), then unplug it from the mains. Use the screwdriver to remove the cabinet screws at the back (the ones along the edges), then slide out the cabinet cover. Some tower cabinets let you remove one side at a time. For such cabinets, remove the cover on the left side (when facing the cabinet).
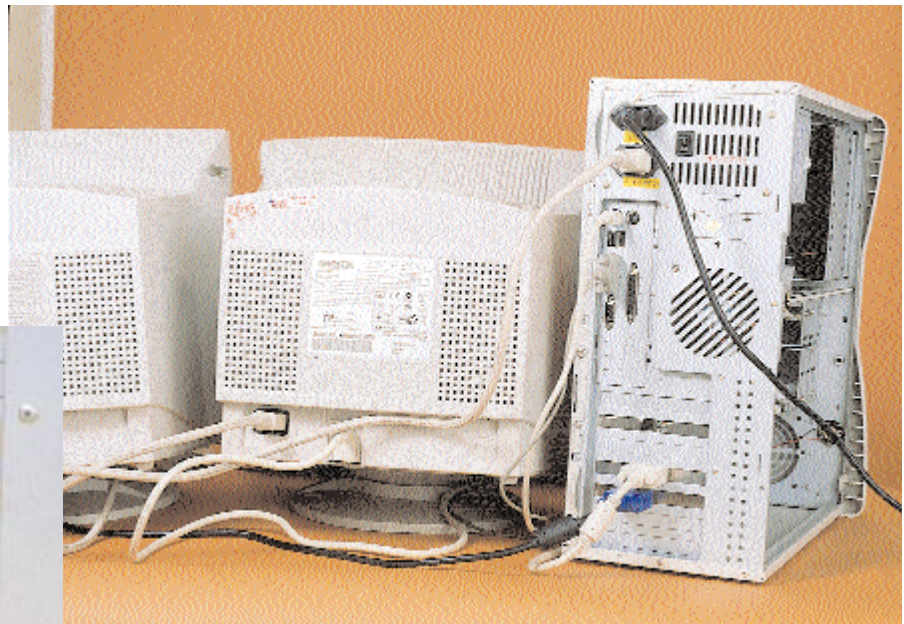

2 Plug-in card

PCI video cards go into the white slots (approximately 3 inches long) towards the back of the computer. An AGP card goes into a slightly smaller-sized brown slot in the same area. Locate an unused slot and remove the protective strip on the cabinet cover next to the slot. Some cabinets require you to snap off the protective cover strip of an unused slot. Others require the strip to be unscrewed. Once the strip is out of the way, insert the video card, positioning it such that the card's strip takes the place of the protective strip. Press firmly, then screw the strip to the cabinet.

Note: If the card has not been inserted properly, Windows 98 will fail to recognise it and you will not even get any error messages. Press the card firmly to ensure that it goes all the way in.

advisor
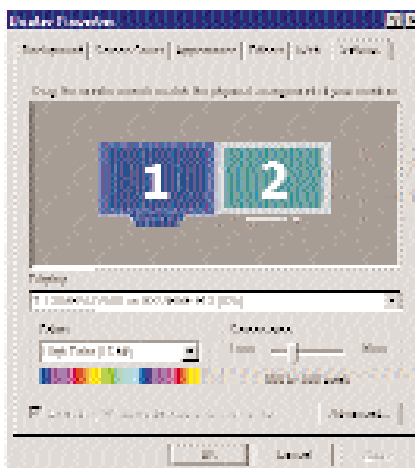
Workshop

3 Attach monitor

Position your second monitor preferably to the right of your existing monitor (saves you a little work while configuring Windows for two monitors). Then attach the power cable to the appropriate outlet, and the monitor cable to your second video card.
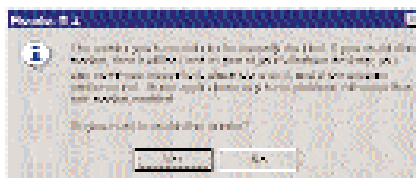

4 Close and reboot

Once the hardware is in place, close the cabinet and boot up. Windows 98 should detect your second video card when booting. After installing the drivers, you will be asked to reboot.If Windows did not detect the second card, check if the card is in place properly.

Upon second boot, Windows will display a message on your second monitor saying that you need to change your monitor settings to enable use of this monitor. To do this, wait until Windows has finished booting, then right-click on the desktop and select Properties. Click on the

Display tab, and then on the monitor bitmap marked with the number 2. When asked if you want to use the monitor, select Yes.

That's it, you are now working with two monitors! Experiment with the positioning of the two monitor icons. Drag the icons around to get them working the way you like—to the right, left or however you want!

KIRAN JONNALAGADDA