

# Lean Screens

17in LCD monitors have never looked better or been so affordable. Ashley McKinnon and Simon Tsang give you a clear view of 14 of the latest space-saving flat panels.

As LCD monitors continue to improve in quality, and prices head in a southerly direction, it's a good time to get that thin display you've always wanted.

While CRT monitors offer bigger displays for less money, their oversize footprint means they take up too much desk space. An LCD monitor uses the entire screen for its viewable area, while a CRT is built with an image-free margin around the edge of the tube, reducing its actual screen real estate. For example, a 19in CRT commonly has only an 18in viewable area.

Flickering is another problem that plagues lower-end CRTs that aren't capable of refresh rates above 75Hz at higher resolutions. LCD displays are flicker-free, even at 60Hz. LCDs have lower radiation output and power consumption than CRTs, and generate less heat. In addition, flat panel displays never suffer from geometric distortion problems.

However, LCD monitors *do* have their share of weaknesses. The response time of a TFT-LCD monitor is slow when compared to a CRT. While this may not affect people using a word processor or browsing the Web, it becomes apparent when watching a movie or playing games. Colour reproduction is another issue with LCDs — they tend to lose detail in bright highlights and dark shadows, making them less than ideal for video editing or for graphics professionals.

LCD monitors are also locked into a native resolution that matches their screen pixel count. All the flat panels in this comparison are designed to work natively at 1,280 x 1,024, which may not suit everyone, especially gamers who run lower resolutions to achieve faster frame rates.

While LCDs work at other resolutions, the interpolation required results in fuzzy or blocky text and images. 17in displays are fast becoming the sweet spot for LCD panels, and make ideal replacements for 17-19in CRTs. The 14 LCD monitors reviewed here represent the entire market range, spanning low- to high-end models. For details of how we tested them, turn to page 79.



## Mitsubishi DV172

In terms of visual performance, the DV172 impressed us with both colour representation and text readability. The Mitsubishi DV172 was the only monitor to clearly display text at eight pixels in size, making it an ideal CRT replacement.

Other tests under DisplayMate achieved equally impressive results. Straight lines and corners were precise and true, and colours were bright, vibrant and accurate in tone. The DV172 didn't suffer from any background noise or ghosting under DVD video playback.

While the two stereo speakers located at the front of the monitor provide decent audio playback, your dedicated desktop speakers won't have anything to worry about just yet.

Unfortunately, the elliptical-shaped plastic base isn't sturdy enough to keep the DV172 surefooted on any surface. Just the slightest bump from behind is near enough to topple the monitor. It's also impossible to adjust the monitor's tilt without having to hold the base to keep the whole unit from moving.

It's interesting to note that the DV172 includes both analogue (VGA) and digital (DVI) connectors, not usually seen on LCD monitors in this price bracket.

This may not be the most stylishly designed monitor (at least it's available in black), and it could use a slightly larger, heavier base, but when you take into account its low price and impressive performance, its flaws can easily be overlooked.

### Details ▶▶

**Native Resolution**  
1,280 x 1,024  
**Response Time** 16ms  
**Contrast Ratio** 500:1  
**Brightness** 260 cd/m<sup>2</sup>  
**Pixel Clock** 135MHz  
**Inputs** VGA, DVI  
**Dimensions (HWD)**  
382 x 404 x 200mm  
**Weight** 4.7kg  
**Contact** Mitsubishi Electric  
**Phone** (02) 9684 7777  
**Online** [www.mitsubishi-electric.com.au](http://www.mitsubishi-electric.com.au)  
**Price** \$1,099

### Verdict

- ✓ Price competitive, performed well under testing.
- ✗ Very bland looking, unstable.



## AG neovo F-17



Decked out in stealthy black and grey, the AG neovo F-17 is a great looking monitor with impressive all-round image quality. The most impressive feature of the F-17 is its wide viewing angle, allowing for visibility not usually found in LCD panels.

The F-17 performed extremely well throughout most of the tests, the only noticeable flaw was text readability. Black text on a white background was easily read, but when reversed with white text on a black background the text seemed to bleed, becoming distorted and almost out of focus. No amount of manual or automatic tuning alleviated this. We then tested the F-17 under various resolutions using Word XP and Excel XP to see if the text problem was apparent under normal viewing applications. Fortunately it wasn't.

Colour matching was good, with no tinges or dulling detected, although we noticed a hint of ghosting during DVD movie playback. Analogue connection is the only option as no DVI input is included. No external power supply is needed as the power cable plugs directly into the monitor and the cables can be tucked away at the rear of the monitor to help keep things tidy.

One gripe is that while the F-17 is quite heavy and solid in construction, it doesn't sit firmly on any surface and wobbles at the slightest bump.

At \$1,499, however, you'd expect some extras, such as speakers, a USB hub or even a DVI connector but they're not even an option. What you get for your money is a good quality LCD panel, and if that's all you're looking for, the neovo F-17 is a stylish pleaser.

### Details ►►

<b>Native Resolution</b>	1,280 x 1,024
<b>Response Time</b>	30ms
<b>Contrast Ratio</b>	300:1
<b>Brightness</b>	230 cd/m <sup>2</sup>
<b>Pixel Clock</b>	80MHz
<b>Inputs</b>	VGA
<b>Dimensions (HWD)</b>	420 x 413 x 172mm
<b>Weight</b>	4.9kg
<b>Contact</b>	Camcom International
<b>Phone</b>	(02) 9418 8888
<b>Online</b>	www.camcom-international.com
<b>Price</b>	\$1,499

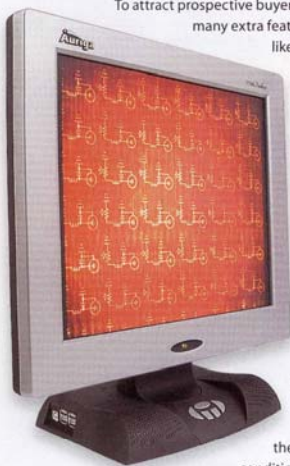
### Verdict

✓ Stylish design.

✗ A bit pricey for what you get, no digital connection.



## Auriga L17A



To attract prospective buyers, Auriga has packed its monitor with as many extra features as possible. While this may sound like good news, there is no denying the fact that the L17A under-performs in the visual quality stakes.

The first problem we noticed with the Auriga L17A was when the auto tune button was pressed, it didn't centre the screen display. It had to be manually re-oriented using the confusing OSD menu, thus negating the "auto" option.

Under testing it soon became apparent that the L17A suffered from a bad case of background noise pollution, which became very noticeable with darker backgrounds. Flickering also became an issue under several tests, and increased in line with the amount of detail and action happening on the screen. However under more static conditions, such as when using Microsoft Word,

flickering was barely detected.

In its favour, the Auriga L17A sets itself up as a jack of all trades. The base of the monitor includes a set of stereo speakers and four USB 2.0 ports for external connectivity. What we really liked about the L17A was that it can freely swivel on its stand. Tilt adjustment was also good, with just the right amount of resistance.

A close look at the monitor revealed that the build quality of the L17A wasn't quite up to scratch. Several of the plastic parts didn't exactly match up and, overall, it felt a little cheap.

While the Auriga L17A looks good on paper it just doesn't live up to expectations. The background noise may not be apparent in all situations but it's there nonetheless and will disappoint when you least expect it.

### Details ►►

<b>Native Resolution</b>	1,280 x 1,024
<b>Response Time</b>	25ms
<b>Contrast Ratio</b>	400:1
<b>Brightness</b>	250 cd/m <sup>2</sup>
<b>Pixel Clock</b>	80MHz
<b>Inputs</b>	VGA, DVI
<b>Dimensions (HWD)</b>	420 x 413 x 172mm
<b>Weight</b>	6.2kg
<b>Contact</b>	AKA Technology
<b>Phone</b>	1300 655 911
<b>Online</b>	www.go4auriga.com
<b>Price</b>	\$1,499

### Verdict

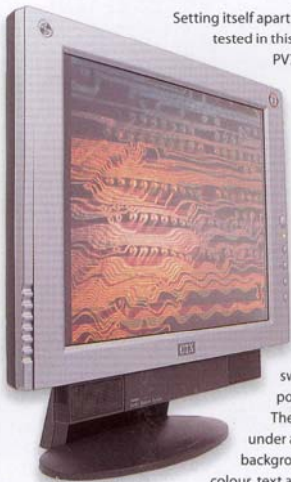
✓ USB hub, swivel base.

✗ Suffered from bad background noise.



# Labs Challenge

## CTX PV720A



Setting itself apart from all the other monitors tested in this Labs Challenge, the CTX PV720A's screen can be rotated 90 degrees. This allows the user to have the screen in either a portrait or landscape configuration.

Once the screen has been rotated, the included Pivot Pro software reorients the display. The screen display can be rotated 90, 180 or 270 degrees, depending on your specific need. That's the only movement the monitor makes however, as no swivel or height adjustment was possible.

The PV720A performed well under all DisplayMate tests. No background noise was detected and colour, text and all shapes displayed true.

We did however notice a white strip along the bottom edge of the screen, more noticeable when a dark image was being displayed. It appeared that the LCD panel hadn't been positioned in the screen frame properly. This is a major flaw to look out for when buying any new LCD monitor.

Unlike the other monitors, there is no auto tune button on the PV720A. All configuration changes must be made manually, but the PV720A worked perfectly straight out of the box. The OSD menu allowed for simple navigation, and all standard options are available to the user.

The monitor is solid in construction, sits firmly on the desktop and doesn't suffer from wobbling. Audio came in the form of an add-on module attached underneath the screen bezel that included a set of stereo speakers and a headphone socket.

### Details ▶▶

#### Native Resolution

1,280 x 1,024

**Response Time** 30ms

**Contrast Ratio** 350:1

**Brightness** 250 cd/m<sup>2</sup>

**Pixel Clock** 80MHz

**Inputs** VGA

**Dimensions (HWD)** 553 x 578 x 258mm

**Weight** 7.3kg

**Contact** Ocean Office

Automation

**Phone** 1300 132 662

**Online** [www.octek.com.au](http://www.octek.com.au)

**Price** \$1,299

### Verdict

✓ Price competitive, screen can be rotated.

✗ No auto adjustment button.



## Hansol H711



With its combination of dull looks and below par visual performance, the Hansol H711 is hardly going to set the world on fire. There's just no getting away from the fact that the H711 looks and feels cheap, reflected in its \$880 sticker price, which makes it one of the cheapest 17in TFT LCD monitors around.

Upon connecting to our test system, we noticed the edges of icons and text looked slightly out of focus. Hitting the auto tune button only made the problem worse. Manual tuning did manage to get back to an almost clear display, but it just wasn't as sharp as most of the other monitors we tested. We also noticed a few more anomalies when testing with

DisplayMate. Yellows displayed with a slight green tinge, and there was a slight instance of background noise.

There is no DVI connection option, so the almost-clear analogue is as good as it gets. The default brightness level of 50 is just too bright for normal use, but this was easily corrected under the OSD menu — which was one of the better features of the monitor.

Moreover, the monitor doesn't sit in a stable manner. The stand could either use more weight to hold the monitor down, or use a better design. The H711's casing could also use a darker tone as it shows up fingerprints and marks.

The inferiority of the Hansol H711 became more apparent when compared with the other monitors in this feature. Even at this price, you're better off with a high quality CRT instead, or saving a few more pennies for a better quality LCD.

### Details ▶▶

#### Native Resolution

1,280 x 1,024

**Response Time** 25ms

**Contrast Ratio** 350:1

**Brightness** 250 cd/m<sup>2</sup>

**Pixel Clock** 80MHz

**Inputs** VGA

**Dimensions (HWD)** 420 x 193 x 443mm

**Weight** 6.4kg

**Contact** Samsung

**Phone** (02) 9763 9700

**Online** [www.samsung.com.au](http://www.samsung.com.au)

**Price** \$880

### Verdict

✓ Inexpensive.

✗ Focus problems, colour issues, cheap feel, wobbly stand.



## Hercules Prophetview 920

The Hercules Prophetview 920 combines stylish design with high-quality screen output. During DisplayMate testing it was clear the Prophetview was a high-class product. Text was clear with sharpness maintained around curves in individual characters.

Colours were bright and vibrant, and all base colours looked natural, though black tended to develop a pink tinge when the brightness level was raised. This was corrected by manually adjusting the black settings. There was also some background noise detected under greyscale testing.

Swapping from VGA to DVI connectors toned this down a little, but it was still apparent. While it may not be enough to affect everyday use, under some circumstances the user may notice background flickering.

We tried several different sources through the Prophetview 920's Video Composite connector cable, which allows you to attach a VCR, DVD player or digital camera without needing a PC. Unfortunately this mode cannot match VGA/DVI performance, with dull colours and a hazy display.

With a 25ms response time though, the Prophetview 920 performed well during motion video playback in standard VGA or DVI inputs, not suffering from the ghosting seen on some of the other LCD monitors.

Five recessed buttons along the right side of the screen provide access to the Prophetview's onscreen menu functions with easy-to-use navigation design. The curved metallic stand does a great job of keeping the Prophetview 920 in place. The stand can be removed via a single screw which allows the screen to hang on a wall.

### Details ▶▶

**Native Resolution**

1,280 x 1,024

**Response Time** 25ms**Contrast Ratio** 350:1**Brightness** 250 cd/m<sup>2</sup>**Pixel Clock** 105MHz**Inputs** VGA, DVI,

Video Composite

**Dimensions (HWD)** 440 x 340

x 160mm

**Weight** 6kg**Contact** Guillemot Australia**Online** www.hercules.com**Phone** (02) 8303 1818**Price** \$1,599

### Verdict

- ✓ Stylish design.
- ✗ Suffers from some background noise.



## NEC MultiSync LCD1700V

The NEC MultiSync LCD1700V is another monitor in the beige brigade. Although not much is going for the monitor in terms of looks, its performance showed a bit more promise. The LCD1700V is a capable monitor, but suffered from a slow response time which affected the display when fast changing images are being shown.

While playing a DVD we noticed some ghosting — especially during darker scenes. We also tested the monitor under Quake III, and once again, ghosting was detected during fast action gaming.

Testing under DisplayMate told a more positive story: no distortions were detected; all lines, curves and corners displayed clean and sharp. The colour output from the LCD1700V was rich and bright with no detectable colour fading or mismatches. Text was easily readable at sizes nine

pixels and above, and at all colour combinations. The monitor sat firmly on the desk thanks to the large semi-circular base plate, but tilt adjustment isn't easy and there isn't much travel in the stand. Swivel action and DVI input haven't been included as part of the feature set.

The menu buttons are nicely located on a cutaway portion at the front right of the monitor bezel. The buttons are clearly marked and the OSD menu system is well presented and easy to navigate.

Price is one of the LCD1700V's strongest drawbacks. For \$1,199, the LCD1700V represents good value. Those who use a monitor for graphically static work, such as word processing or 2D design, should be more than happy with the NEC's quality, but if you enjoy your onscreen action thick and fast, you're better off looking elsewhere.

### Details ▶▶

**Native Resolution**

1,280 x 1,024

**Response Time** 25ms**Contrast Ratio** 400:1**Brightness** 250 cd/m<sup>2</sup>**Pixel Clock** 98MHz**Inputs** VGA**Dimensions (HWD)** 434 x 437

x 220mm

**Weight** 6.2kg**Contact** NEC Australia**Phone** 13 16 32**Online** www.nec.com.au**Price** \$1,199

### Verdict

- ✓ Low price, static display clear and sharp.
- ✗ Dynamic image performance not so good.



# Labs Challenge

## Philips 170B2

What the Philips 170B2 lacks in aesthetic appeal it makes up for with visual performance. The colours are especially vibrant and clear, and the display is very clean and sharp. We saw a hint of blue tinge on some dark backgrounds under the analogue connection, but this was not the case when connected using the DVI connection. It's also interesting to note that even though the response time is rated at 40ms, we didn't notice any lag or ghosting during the tests, and the Philips performed better than many higher specified and more expensive monitors.

The OSD menu is easily navigated and simple to interpret. A handy auto button is included which sets the monitor to the optimum configuration for your current task. The 170B2 doesn't include a USB hub or single ports in the base and,



interestingly, Philips doesn't include a DVI cable as part of the package — adding extra expense to the buyer if you want to use it with a digital output. As the power supply is integrated, there's no external power adaptor to worry about — just a single power cable.

The main gripe we had with the Philips 170B2 is that the tilt action was too stiff, making it difficult to adjust the angle. The trade-off is that there's a large amount of tilt travel, so it's at least possible to get the angle you want. Build quality is also an issue. The monitor feels loose in construction, and it wobbled at the slightest touch.

More attention should have been paid in the manufacturing process to tighten the 170B2 up. While it's not as pretty as other monitors, the Philips 170B2 is a solid performer with good visual quality.

### Details ▶▶

**Native Resolution** 1,280 x 1,024  
**Response Time** 40ms  
**Contrast Ratio** 400:1  
**Brightness** 250 cd/m<sup>2</sup>  
**Pixel Clock** 135MHz  
**Inputs** VGA, DVI  
**Dimensions (HWD)** 446 x 471 x 181mm  
**Weight** 7kg  
**Contact** Philips Australia  
**Phone** 1300 363 391  
**Online** [www.philips.com.au](http://www.philips.com.au)  
**Price** \$1,199

### Verdict

- ✓ Clear and crisp display.
- ✗ Dull looking, a little unsteady on its stand.



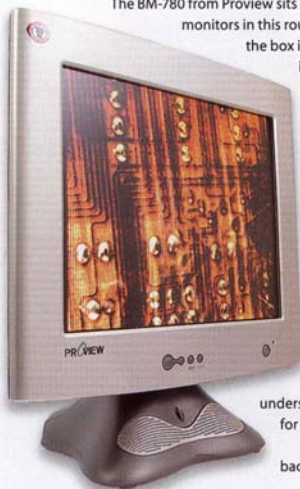
## Proview BM-780

The BM-780 from Proview sits at the budget end of the monitors in this roundup. Straight out of the box it had a dead pixel, right in the centre of the screen.

This was not a good start — and the bad news didn't end there. Running through the DisplayMate tests brought our attention to a slight distortion on both edges towards the upper half of the screen.

Add to this the fact that the colours were a little oversaturated — though we were able to manually tone them down a little through the OSD menu — and you begin to understand why this monitor retails for a mere \$895.

To its credit, however, no background noise or flickering



was noticeable, which won back some points, but these were quickly lost again on evidence of ghosting. The BM-780 is definitely not a gaming or movie viewing platform, and would be adequate only for tasks such as word processing or Web browsing — as long as you do it slowly.

Physically, the BM-780 is quite large and imposing. The chunky base plants it firmly on the desk, and incorporates a speaker and volume control. The tilt mechanism was very stiff so it was difficult to adjust the monitor without tipping over.

If you are on a very tight budget and are desperate for a 17in LCD monitor, the Proview BM-780 will fill the role for minimal cost, but only just. Despite the inclusion of speakers (and the curious choice of gold paint as standard), we're still not convinced that it's a very smart purchase.

### Details ▶▶

**Native Resolution** 1,280 x 1,024  
**Response Time** 50ms  
**Contrast Ratio** 200:1  
**Brightness** 200 cd/m<sup>2</sup>  
**Pixel Clock** 80MHz  
**Inputs** VGA  
**Dimensions (HWD)** 335 x 585 x 566mm  
**Weight** 7.6kg  
**Contact** Natcomp Technology Australia  
**Phone** (02) 9712 0099  
**Online** [www.natcomp.com.au](http://www.natcomp.com.au)  
**Price** \$895

### Verdict

- ✓ Inexpensive.
- ✗ Dead pixel, distortion, colour oversaturation, ghosting.



## Samsung Syncmaster 171n

The 171n looks professional thanks to its minimalist styling. The 17in LCD panel is framed by a very thin bezel, giving prominence to only what's on the screen.

We were initially impressed by the display quality: the colours were bright and distinct with a clear image overall. However, firing up DisplayMate for testing quickly revealed several shortcomings.

Firstly, the 171n suffered from a slight bowing distortion down the left side of the screen. The auto tune couldn't fix this, neither could finetuning with the manual controls.

The 171n also struggled with displaying fonts nine pixels and smaller in size. While they were still readable, the Syncmaster 171n wasn't as clear and sharp as most of the other monitors, which had no problem displaying fonts at this size. Samsung's claim of

25ms response time wasn't reflected in practice, as there were instances of lag and ghosting when watching DVD playback. Other 25ms LCD monitors, such as the Viewsonic VX700 didn't suffer from the same performance hit.

On the plus side, the Syncmaster didn't suffer from any background noise. Being a purely analogue LCD monitor, the Syncmaster 171n didn't include a DVI connector to complement the VGA. A nice touch is the hole in the lower part of the base, allowing the power and VGA cables to be passed through. The buttons on the front of the monitor, while continuing the sleek look of the monitor, feel very cheap when pressed and don't actually work every time. Overall, the poor rendering of smaller fonts, evidence of lag and ghosting, and lack of DVI input make it hard to justify the price.

### Details ▶▶

**Native Resolution**  
1,280 x 1,024  
**Response Time** 25ms  
**Contrast Ratio** 350:1  
**Brightness** 250 cd/m2  
**Pixel Clock** 135MHz  
**Inputs** VGA  
**Dimensions (HWD)** 368 x 370 x 191mm  
**Weight** 5.1kg  
**Contact** Samsung  
**Phone** (02) 9763 9700  
**Online** [www.samsung.com.au](http://www.samsung.com.au)  
**Price** \$1,599

### Verdict

- ✓ Clean, compact design.
- ✗ Expensive, slight bowing of display.



## Sony SDM-S71

Turn on the SDM-S71 you are immediately greeted by a beautiful display, clear in every single respect.

All icons are sharp and in focus, with text displayed clearly and easily readable. Out of the box, the display needed very little adjustment and the OSD menu system was a joy to use.

The SDM-S71 passed all the DisplayMate tests with flying colours. No background noise was detected and all lines, corners and curves were displayed without any sign of distortion. Motion video posed no problems either, and just like its more expensive sibling, the SDM-X72, the S71 showed no ghosting or lag.

Physically, the monitor wasn't as attractive as some of the other tested monitors, such as the Hercules Prophetview 920, but doesn't offend

either. Although the oval-shaped base doesn't look big enough to keep the monitor stable, we found the S71 to be rock-solid on the desk. The tilt angle adjustment on the SDM-S71 also impressed, with a wide range of motion allowed — though there's no swivel action. The base can be completely removed to allow for arm or wall mounting — depending on your situation.

Once the \$1,599 price tag comes into the equation, however, it takes some of the gloss off the monitor's stellar performance. To pay this much for a monitor that doesn't include speakers, a USB hub or even a DVI connector, keeps the S71 from a perfect score.

If image quality is your main consideration, however, and you're not afraid to pay to get it, the Sony SDM-S71 represents 17in LCD technology at its finest.

### Details ▶▶

**Native Resolution**  
1,280 x 1,024  
**Response Time** 20ms  
**Contrast Ratio** 350:1  
**Brightness** 250 cd/m2  
**Pixel Clock** 135MHz  
**Inputs** VGA  
**Dimensions (HWD)** 423 x 399 x 233mm  
**Weight** 6.5kg  
**Contact** Sony Australia  
**Phone** 1300 137 669  
**Online** [www.sony.com.au](http://www.sony.com.au)  
**Price** \$1,599

### Verdict

- ✓ High quality picture output.
- ✗ Expensive. No digital output.



## Sony SDM-X72

Graphics and design professionals take note, the Sony SDM-X72 will become your monitor of choice — providing you can afford the \$1,899 asking price.

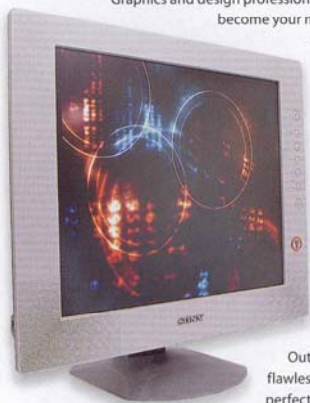
DisplayMate testing ran and completed with no problems to report. All lines, curves and corners were exact and sharp. No ghosting or background noise was detected and the display text used for testing was met with precise, perfectly formed fonts. Just to add to the accolades, colours were rich and full, being among the best of all the tested TFT LCD monitors. The black and white colours were perfectly represented with no off-tinges towards the edges of the screen.

Output from the DVD movie test was flawless, with playback being visually perfect. Once again, not even a hint of ghosting or lag was to be found. This can be attributed to the 20ms response time of the monitor. We also liked the

fact that no external power supply was needed, the power cable plugs directly into the underside of the monitor.

Though it's a matter of personal taste, it's interesting that Sony (most noted for its innovative designs) has created such a bland-looking monitor. It actually looks better from the back than the front. There is also no swivel action available, but at least the double-hinged tilt action is spot on, and allows for the height to be adjusted a little as well.

The SDM-X72 has dual input, with two VGA and a single DVI connector available. A button on the front of the monitor allows for simple switching between input sources. There's also a set of stereo speakers adorning the front corners of the monitor, and they do provide reasonably good audio playback for their diminutive size.



### Details ▶▶

**Native Resolution**  
1,280 x 1,024  
**Response Time** 20ms  
**Contrast Ratio** 400:1  
**Brightness** 280 cd/m<sup>2</sup>  
**Pixel Clock** 135MHz  
**Inputs** 2 x VGA, DVI  
**Dimensions (HWD)** 438 x 410 x 227mm  
**Weight** 7.1kg  
**Contact** Sony Australia  
**Phone** 1300 137 669  
**Online** [www.sony.com.au](http://www.sony.com.au)  
**Price** \$1,899

### Verdict

- ✓ Picture-perfect quality.
- ✗ Expensive, bland design.



## Viewmaster CM670

As the cheapest monitor in this comparison, we weren't expecting a great deal from the CM670 considering the performance of its similarly-priced competitors. Unfortunately we were correct in our assumptions as the Viewmaster performed poorly in most of our tests.

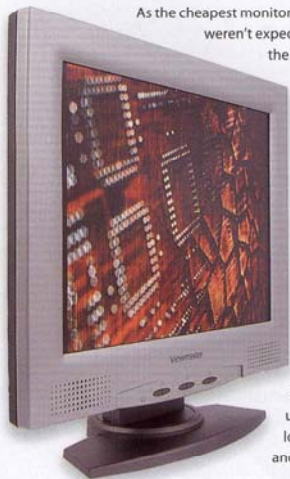
The colours appeared dull and washed out, and the overall display quality seemed very lifeless. Accurate colour reproduction seemed to prove a big challenge for the CM670, as evidenced in the primary colour test under DisplayMate. Red looked especially bland, and trying to make any

adjustments via the monitors control panel only made matters worse.

The menu system was unclear and frustrating to navigate. At least the OSD menu buttons, located within the recessed portion at the front of the screen, worked well. DVD playback fared no better than the static tests. Although a response time of 25ms is claimed, we were met with ghosting and lag, especially on darker colours.

The CM670 is equipped with a pair of built-in stereo speakers that produce a surprisingly good sound. There's also a volume control dial and a headphone socket. As expected for its price, DVI input is not included.

As long as your expectations aren't too high, \$810 isn't a lot to pay for a 17in LCD monitor. Just bear in mind that a great deal of compromises have been made and you will have to sacrifice image quality under fast-action video or gaming applications.



### Details ▶▶

**Native Resolution**  
1,280 x 1,024  
**Response Time** 25ms  
**Contrast Ratio** 400:1  
**Brightness** 250 cd/m<sup>2</sup>  
**Pixel Clock** 80MHz  
**Inputs** VGA  
**Dimensions (HWD)** 420 x 193 x 443mm  
**Weight** 6.4kg  
**Contact** Hallmark  
**Phone** (03) 9540 8555  
**Online** [www.hallmark.com.au](http://www.hallmark.com.au)  
**Price** \$810

### Verdict

- ✓ Very cheap.
- ✗ Colours appear dull, ghosting on DVD playback.



## Viewsonic Viewpanel VX700



Even though the Viewsonic Viewpanel VX700 is only a 17in TFT LCD monitor, the 45mm bezel fools you into thinking it's bigger than it really is.

The base of the monitor is solid and large enough to keep it stable when bumped. On the front of the monitor is a series of control buttons providing access to the easy-to-navigate OSD menu. The Viewpanel VX700 also includes a good set of built-in stereo speakers with volume and mute controls.

As the Viewpanel VX700 is quite a large monitor, it can be difficult to adjust the tilt angle and get into just the right position.

Visual quality from the Viewpanel VX700 is decent. No background noise was detected under DisplayMate testing. Colour representation was inconsistent as we could never get a clean white — it

always had a slight pinkish tone to it. The Viewpanel's several colour temperature options, including 9300K, 6500K, 5400K, 5000K and custom, made little difference in reducing this effect. While this may not be too noticeable when playing games or watching video, working away in Word or Excel makes the problem instantly obvious. It may not worry some, but it may annoy those who spend most of their time looking at a white background.

Overall, the Viewpanel VX700 is an above average monitor, but when you look at the high price it could hardly be recommended as a good buy. When you consider that the Viewpanel VX700 is towards the top end of the pricing scale in this batch of 17in LCD monitors, you'd expect it to be a top performer in all areas, but sadly, it isn't.

### Details ▶▶

#### Native Resolution

1,280 x 1,024

Response Time 25ms

Contrast Ratio 550:1

Brightness 250 cd/m<sup>2</sup>

Pixel Clock 135MHz

Inputs VGA, DVI

#### Dimensions (HWD)

409 x 434 x 181mm

Weight 6.2kg

Contact Viewsonic Australia

#### Online

[www.viewsonic.com.au](http://www.viewsonic.com.au)

Phone (02) 9929 3955

Price \$1,799

### Verdict

- ✓ High speed display performance.
- ✗ Very pricey, tilt adjustment too stiff, unable to display a clean white.



## How we tested

Each monitor was individually tested using an Athlon XP 2000+ system, with 512MB of RAM and an nVidia GeForce 4 Ti 4600-based video card.

DisplayMate Multimedia edition was used to evaluate each of the monitors by running a variety of tests to determine performance, quality and set up. Where appropriate, testing was

done through both VGA and DVI connections.

For this Labs Challenge we also used two DVD movies (*Monsters Inc.* and *Planet of the Apes*) to check the accuracy of video playback. This determined the monitor's capability to handle fast video and screen for the presence of ghosting.