

Video Cards for LCD Monitors

By Bart Koslow (3/14/2008)

I decided to retrofit my daughter's older computer with a new AGP graphics card so she could install an LCD monitor in place of her CRT monitor. LCD monitors should be run in Digital mode at their native resolution for best results. A typical 22" LCD monitor runs at a native resolution of 1680 x 1050 and a typical 24" monitor has a native resolution of 1920 x 1200.

I wanted to make sure that the video card I bought would support either or both of these resolutions. You may determine available display modes (resolutions) by right clicking on your video screen, selecting Properties, Settings, Advanced, Adapter and List All Modes. You may also determine this by running the control utility that comes with your graphics card. I found out that the display modes shown are particular to the video card and monitor combination you are currently using. You may see different modes if you select a different monitor with the same card. Furthermore, the modes you see using an analog monitor with an analog (VGA) connection may be different from those you see using a digital connection to an LCD monitor. Boy - was I getting an education!

There are numerous manufacturers of video cards. However, almost all use either an NVidia or an ATI controller chipset on their cards. ATI type cards usually list some of the available display modes on the retail box, but NVidia cards do not. They only specify the highest resolution available. Both of these types of cards come with a control center utility that may be used to adjust many features of the video card. You may also adjust many features of your video card (including resolution) by right clicking on your video screen and making the proper selections. What was my surprise to find that using an NVidia card you may customize the display mode (resolution) up to the highest resolution to fit the monitor you are using, but this feature is not available with ATI cards. With ATI cards you take what you get. However, ATI cards have many more display modes available than shown on the retail box. You will find that all current video cards do offer all the display modes you may require, so this is no longer an issue. Just make sure that the maximum resolution the card supports is higher than the ones you wish to use and you should have no problem.

This information should apply to any video card or for that matter video or graphics that may be built in to a new motherboard. All of this took me time and some aggravation to learn.