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How to troubleshoot computer monitor problems

Pixabay/Pexels In the world of computing, a computer monitor's function is to accurately and clearly display the programs, software or video being shown to the user. In more technical terms, a monitor is a video output device that displays text, video and other information. The Computer Monitor Before display screens were built into computer laptops and tablets, the computer monitor was designed as a stand-alone piece of the overall system of a desktop computer. The computer would do its work, and as a result of its connection with a video card, the computer would display the results on a computer monitor. There are two main types of computer monitors: cathode ray tube (CRT) and liquid crystal display (LCD) technology. Let's have a look at each. Cathode Ray Tubes (CRT) CRT monitors have been until recently the computer's mainstay visual output device. They have been prevalent since the start of personal computing in the 20th century. For their first few iterations, CRT monitors generally looked like old, small TV sets. Liquid Crystal Display (LCD) Liquid crystal display monitors are more technologically advanced monitors for today's computer users. LCD monitors utilize LED technology, and overall are thinner, more compact, lighter in weight, more portable, inexpensive, and easier on a computer user's eyes for long-time viewing. They also provide high-quality graphics on screens, while using up less energy. LCD vs. CRT LCD monitors have overtaken CRT monitors in the marketplace, primarily due to the LCD's lower prices, crisper pictures, higher quality and compact size. Compared to these sleeker, more popular LCD monitors, CRT monitors are larger in size, have smaller screens in inches and have lower display resolution. One benefit of CRT monitors is how you can see images and text while standing or seated at near 180-degree angles from the front of the monitor. LCD screens tend to get blurry when looking at these wide angles. Resolution Computer monitors are generally produced with 720 pixels (HD) or 1080 pixels (Full HD) resolution. Each of these resolution standards are good quality, although the 1080p level is sharper and clearer to see for humans. The 720p level was dominant for many years, but advancements in technology have relinquished its dominance to the 1080 level. Aspect Ratio The aspect ratio refers to the length and height of a viewing experience on a screen. Most common today is the 16:9 (L:H) aspect ratio. You see this ratio in more Web software, video and games. Thus, today's monitors are being produced with wider, longer screens, instead of the older, more square-shaped 4:3 monitors. MORE FROM REFERENCE.COM Monitor Problems and Solutions ProblemSolution Monitor is blank after starting computer. Check to be sure that the Monitor has power and that the light is on. Check your cables connecting your monitor with your computer. NOTE: Depending on your computer and monitor set up you will a specific type of cable. You could have a Standard VGA cable (Click here), S-Video cable (Click here), DVI cable (Click here) or HDMI cable (Click here). Make sure all connections are firm and properly in place before retrying to start your computer. Disconnect all devices except for the mouse, keyboard and monitor. Reboot your computer to see if the issue is resolved. If it is, then it is one of the devices that you have disconnected that is causing the problem. Try connecting them one at a time and rebooting each time until the original problem occurs. Contact your technology coordinator and explain the situation. Try connecting the monitor to a different PC using the problem monitor's video cable. If it still doesn't work, try the known good monitors video cable. Try unplugging the monitors power cable, then wait about 20 or 30 seconds and plug it back in. If none of the above troubleshooting steps does not solve the issue, then it is likely that the monitor is bad and will need to be replaced. The display is rotated. Go to Start and then Control Panel, then to Intel Extreme Graphics Applet and then Rotation tab. Uncheck the Enable Rotation check box. (Click here) Click Apply, then OK. Exit Control Panel, and then display should be the correct orientation. Determining type and size of monitor. There are 2 major monitor types in schools. They are CRT (Cathode Ray Tube) and LCD (Liquid Crystal Display). CRT monitors (Click here) are the clunky older monitors, while the LCDs (Click here) are flat-screen displays. To determine a computer's monitor size, one would need to measure the screen diagonally from corner to corner. Sometimes you will need to provide this information when you encounter some problems and report an issue to a technology coordinator. The words on the monitor are too small and unreadable. You will need to change the monitor's screen resolution. Right click the Desktop and click Properties. Go to the setting tab and check the screen resolution. Choose a notch, click apply and then click ok. (Click here) The picture on the monitor is stretched, too bright/dark, or is not the way you like it. You will need to check the monitor settings. Look for a button on the bottom of the monitor which will open a menu to change monitor settings. Find the default settings and return the monitor to default settings. (Click here) Use the vertical and horizontal settings to center the image and stretch to your liking. (Click here) Set the brightness and contrast to your liking. (Click here) Set the hue and locate the point where the colors on the screen look accurate or life-like. (Click here) If the settings do not improve the image display, the monitor may be going bad. Contact your technology coordinator. The image around the edges of the screen does not look right. NOTE: This is for CRT monitors only. You may need to degauss the monitor. In most cases the monitor will degauss itself. Degaussing will clear electromagnetic buildup from the screen. Simply turn the monitor off and turn it back on. You could also look through the monitor settings and select degauss from the options. (Click here) You should hear a specific "static" sound. The screen may look odd for a second as it reconfigures itself. (Click here) The monitor should be back to normal after the degaussing process. Some of the most common computer monitor problems include blank screens, the monitor not turning on, and images being displayed in the wrong size or blurry. This happens even if you have a high-end monitor for your Macbook Pro or PC. Luckily, there are several easy steps you can take to troubleshoot these and other issues that will generally solve the problem. Key Takeaways: The most common cause of monitor problems is in the connections. Adjusting display settings can fix images appearing improperly. Some monitors require software to function properly. Troubleshooting Common Monitor Problems 1. Restart Monitor Restarting your electronics is always the best place to start when troubleshooting a problem. If there is an issue with your favorite computer monitor, turn it off completely and then back on again. Most displays have a power indicator light that will light up when it is on. If this light does not turn on after pressing the on/off button, your display is either dead or is not receiving power. If your display does turn on but is still experiencing issues, go through the same reboot process with the computer you're connecting it to. Tip: Restarting your electronics is always the best place to start when troubleshooting a problem Warning: If this light does not turn on after pressing the on/off button, your display is either dead or is not receiving power Related Post: Steps to Take When Your Computer Monitor Won't Turn On 2. Check Connections The next step in fixing any screen and operational issues with your display is to check all of your connections. You want to make sure that the electrical cable and the computer connection cable are both securely in place. The easiest way to do this is to unplug the display from the power source and from the monitor completely. Do the same with the cord to the computer. Then, resecure both cords tightly in the correct input ports. Tip: You want to make sure that the electrical cable and the computer connection cable are both securely in place 3. Inspect For Physical Damage If problems persist, check the screen, wires, and inputs for any signs of physical damage. For the display, look for any cracks in the body of the monitor or the screen. When inspecting the cables, look for any crimps in the wire, cuts, or fraying. Check the corresponding inputs to make sure that they aren't loose or damaged. Consequently, if there's physical damage present your warranty should cover it. If you don't have one yet, you'll need to decide if the Asurion Amazon protection plan is worth it. 4. Adjust Settings If images on your display appear but are the wrong size or blurry, you should go into your computer's display settings to make adjustments. If your desktop image is either too small or too big for the monitor size, adjust the display's resolution settings until you get a clear picture that fits the full size of your display. Here, you can also make sure that the computer is properly recognizing the monitor. Tip: If images on your display appear but are the wrong size or blurry, you should go into your computer's display settings to make adjustments 5. Install Updates Some monitors require a driver installed on your computer to function properly. In some cases, installing or updating your monitor's driver could solve connection and picture issues. To find out more about your display's driver and download the latest version, go to the manufacturer's website for your monitor and search for your display model. The user manual that came included with the screen should have instructions on proper driver installation as well. Warning: Some monitors require a driver installed on your computer to function properly Sources: * Page 2 If you are shopping around for a new display setup, you may wonder about the difference between 2 monitors vs 3. Is a dual-monitor setup best, or should you go for a tri-monitor setup for your monitor purposes? The best computer monitors, after all, typically allow for either of these configurations. There are a variety of options for a multi-monitor setup that can be all monitors or include other devices too, like pairing your laptop with the best portable monitor for laptop models. Keep reading to learn all about the best use case scenarios for each type of display setup. Two monitors will constitute a cheaper initial investment than three monitors, and the latter will also draw more electricity. Three monitors, however, allow for increased immersion and the ability to multitask, particularly when compared to a single screen. Setting up three monitors may be significantly more complex than setting up a dual monitor and, of course, a single monitor. Differences Between Dual Monitors and Three Monitors The obvious difference is, well, the number of monitors available to look at. Or, you can make it simple and device between two monitors vs ultrawide. Either setup will provide an increased field of view and the capacity for a higher pixel count, which can be important if you are wondering what is a full HD computer monitor. There are many benefits of dual monitors, especially with improved productivity. But, sometimes three can be better than two. Here are more differences between two monitors and three monitors. Make sure your monitors are of the same type and size for maximum integration. Cost Of course, adding an extra monitor means an additional cost. Computer monitors may be cheaper nowadays, but three will still cost more than two. This price will be compounded if you are using UHD displays, in case you are comparing 1080p monitors vs 4K monitors. You can save some money by creating a hodgepodge of monitors you already have laying around, but they will likely not be the same size and may not integrate correctly. Additionally, three monitors will draw more electricity than two monitors, so perhaps investing in two of the best 32 inch gaming monitor models may be your best bet. Immersion Three monitors will provide a more immersive experience over a dual monitor setup, though the latter is no slouch in that department either. This increased immersion can be helpful while playing computer games, editing videos, or even watching movies or TV shows. Multitasking The increased screen real estate will also help when it comes to multitasking. If you are editing videos, for instance, you can allow each monitor to be devoted to various preview screens and one to the timeline. A dual monitor setup is good for this too, but an extra monitor means extra screen real estate. There is a reason, after all, why triple monitors are extremely popular in some professions, such as day trading and video editors. Setup Complexity It will be tougher to set up three monitors than it will be to move up to a dual monitor installation. You will need extra cables, a hub or two, and some time for general troubleshooting, like if the third monitor is not being detected by the computer. Whereas with two monitors, it can very often be plug-and-play. F.A.Q.S Dual monitors vs. ultrawide monitors: what's best for your home office? Dual monitors or even a triple monitor setup can be better for a home office when compared to an ultrawide gaming monitor, as the ultrawide monitors, even a curved monitor, tend to be on the smaller side. How to increase your work productivity when working on a designer monitor? If you are a designer of any kind, consider a dual monitor setup over a single screen, and you may want to opt for triple monitors. A triple monitor setup and a monitor arm will allow for a real boost. Do more monitors increase productivity? In some cases, a triple monitor setup can increase productivity, though you should make sure your computer can handle the visual needs. So make sure your graphics card is up to snuff. STAT: A University of Utah study showed that using 2 x 20" monitors improved productivity by 40% vs using a single 18" screen. (source)

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