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MATROX DUALHEAD2GO

VIDEO EDITING WITH MULTIPLE MONITORS

BY MARK SHAPIRO



Matrox's new DualHead2Go is the first product on the market that will enable you to add multiple monitors to Windows XP, Windows 2000 based laptop computers, and desktop PCs.

Have you ever thought about using multiple monitors when editing your video? Most of us use our desktop computer with a single monitor attached to it, but it's actually easier and more fun to use a computer with multiple monitors. Instead of having everything crammed onto a single monitor, you can spread out your video editing acreage over the various monitors. And let me tell you, based on personal experience, the more monitor acreage you get, the more pleasant it is to work.

For example, with two monitors, you could put your video editing timeline, bins or audio and video clips, as well as the various controls on one monitor. Then you could reserve the second monitor for your preview video window and trim window. If you decided to use three different monitors, you could set it up so that your video editing timeline was on one monitor, your preview and trim monitors were on the second video monitor and the remainder of your video windows and editing options were on a third monitor.

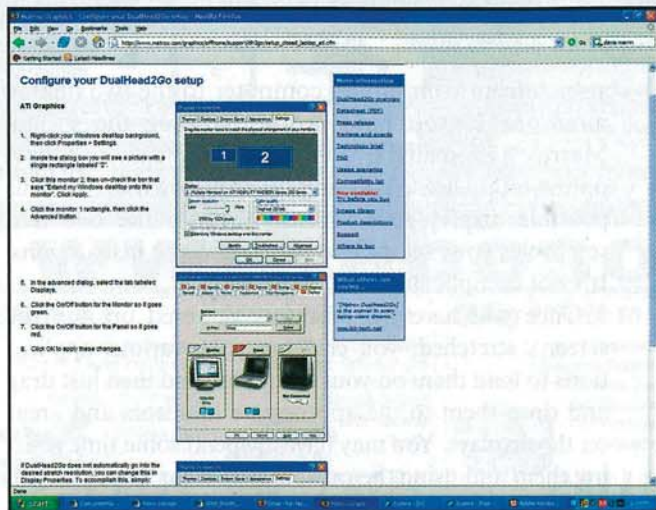
And if your computer has a FireWire or video output, and your software supports this capability, you could then set up a fourth TV/video monitor to use as a line monitor to see exactly how your finished video will look when you play it back on someone's TV set. Most advanced video programs such as **Adobe Premiere Pro**, **Avid**, and **Sony Vegas**, among others, lets you unlock your various editing windows and move them around onto separate monitors as needed.

THE MATROX SOLUTION

For years it has been possible to have multiple monitors for PCs. The solution usually involved an onboard card that you inserted either into the AGP slot or PCI slot on a desktop computer. **Matrox's Parhelia** and **Millenium** cards offer 2- and 3-monitor display capabilities plus additional performance and display control capabilities for high-end video, image editing and gaming applications. You can also find multi-display cards from companies like **ColorGraphic**, **NVIDIA**, **Appian Graphics** and **ATI**. Also, by using extra cards in open AGP or PCI slots in a single computer, you could even stack up more monitors. According to Microsoft, Windows XP will support up to 10 monitors at a time.

Unlike these cards which require you to open up your computer, install the card in an open slot, and possibly have to configure IRQs, **Matrox's new DualHead2Go** is a simple to install and easy to use external box that enables you to add multiple monitors to Windows XP and Windows 2000 based laptop computers and desktop PCs. Matrox claims this is the first product that will provide this capability.

Even if not, this is definitely a nifty little device. The DualHead2Go (\$169 list) is a palm-sized box that connects to your single monitor output. You plug it into the external VGA output of your computer. After the software is installed and configured, your



Software for the DualHead2Go permits you to configure your display setting, this set up screen will split the 2560x1024 desktop display image into a right and left half.



The DualHead2Go is a palm-sized box that connects to your single monitor output, then using the software provided you can maximize your resolution to twice as wide as a standard computer.

computer then recognizes it as a single ultra-widescreen monitor that can provide resolutions of up to 2560x1024, which is twice as wide as standard resolutions. Simple concept but not easy to develop.

According to Matrox, the “DualHead ‘stretched mode’ refers to a single Windows desktop that is set to a very wide resolution.” In other words, a screen display that is wider than it is tall. This Windows desktop then gets digitally “stretched” across two physically separate monitors. Plus, even though the image is “stretched” there is no actual stretching or distortion of the image. No pixels get harmed during making of this process and every pixel is displayed as sharply as it would on a “normal” Windows desktop. The DualHead2Go is capable of supporting the following ‘DualHead Stretched Modes’ (all at up to millions of colors):

- 2048x768 @60Hz, 32bpp
- 2048x768 @85Hz, 32bpp
- 2560x1024 @60Hz, 32bpp

Depending on the graphics device, your monitors and certain software settings, some or all of the resolutions above may be available on a compatible system. You can use any kind of monitor that has a standard analog VGA input—LCD screens, CRTs, etc. Matrox does recommend that you use the same type of monitors to ensure that your display characteristics will match on the two external displays. However, it is not an absolute necessity as I was able to get the system to work with two different types of video monitors.

According to Matrox, “DualHead2Go harnesses the capabilities of the system’s existing GPU or integrated graphics for acceleration of all 2D, 3D and video rendering. There is no image distortion and no scaling to the original raw pixels generated from the existing graphics accelerator. By using DualHead2Go

in conjunction with the built-in display of a laptop, users can benefit with up to three displays of independent information at a time. The wide range of desktop computers with only one video output can now be upgraded to dual-display without requiring users to open up the shell of the computer or install new graphics drivers.”

SETTING IT ALL UP

You can use the Matrox DualHead2Go with Windows-based notebooks with specific integrated graphics technologies. However, you can also use the DualHead2Go with a desktop computer as long as it has the correct video card. Before purchasing the Matrox DualHead, make sure you visit the Matrox site to confirm that it will support your computer’s video card. Also this is for analog monitors only. If you are using a monitor that only has RGB inputs or DVI inputs, you won’t be able to take advantage of the Dualhead2Go.

Matrox has assembled an online list of compatible laptop models including typical brands like **IBM, Fujitsu, Toshiba, Dell, Acer, HP, and Sony**. However, it really depends on the graphic card that is built into the laptop and PC. Interestingly enough, this Matrox product is targeted to the low-end integrated video technologies rather than high-powered, fancy add-in graphics cards for PCs with lots of RAM and display features.

So if you have souped-up your PC with a hot new 3D graphic card for the best video or gaming experience, you may not be able to use the Matrox DualHead2Go. If multiple monitors with great looking video are an essential, you will be better suited with the Matrox Millennium or Parhelia cards.

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CONFIGURING YOUR DISPLAYS

Once you have two monitors attached, you need to set your primary display to 60 MHz frequency rate and a standard 1024x768 display size before you install the software and set up the screens.

If you are using the DualHead with your laptop, switch your laptop display configuration to either external monitor or external monitor and laptop screen. That function is usually accessed by holding the Function Switch and one of the top rows of buttons. If you have never done this before with your laptop, look for the button on the top row with a monitor or screen icon. If that doesn't work, maybe it's a good time to revisit the instructions that came with your laptop.

Insert the Matrox set up software. After it is loaded, you then configure the display setting. You need to decide how many displays you want to run this with. You can use two standalone displays by themselves or you can use your laptop's display as a third monitor. The next step is to launch the Matrox's set up screen.

The DualHead2Go then can split the 2560x1024 desktop display image into a right and left half, each of which is then sent to two separate analog monitors. If you are using a laptop screen, plus two standalone monitors, you then can decide which two screens will be the stretched 2560x1024 display and which will have the "normal" size display.

You can also set it up in a twin display mode where the images will be duplicated on the two external monitors and your program will

stretch from your laptop computer to the two analog monitors. If you have problems doing the set-up, Matrox has created a very helpful and easy to follow online set up area. You simply scroll down the various possible display set-ups until you see the one that resembles your set up and just follow the instructions. It's not complicated.

Once you have the monitors powered up and the screen's stretched, you click on your various applications to load them on your computer, and then just drag and drop them to the appropriate monitors and areas on the displays. You may have to spend some time resizing them and using the maximize buttons, but once you get it the way you like it, you should be able to edit your videos better and faster than ever before.

The new DualHead2Go from Matrox is a very easy to use unit that does exactly what it says it does. It enables you to easily spread your Windows 2000 or Windows XP computing real estate over multiple monitors without having to open up your computer and install a special multi-display adapter. It works well with the standard integrated video subsystems found on the motherboards of most laptops and many economy desktop computers. If you require high performance video and resolution for gaming, this is not an applicable solution. With a list price of \$169, and a retail price of around \$155, this is great way to easily enlarge your computing acreage, especially if you are on the road or are setting up displays and presentations at shows or conferences. ☒



The DualHead2Go works well with standard integrated video subsystems found on most computer systems, however, it is not applicable for high performance video and resolution for gaming.

LINKS

- **Matrox DualHead2Go** — 514-822-6000; www.matrox.com

When Two Monitors Are Better Than One

Having multiple monitors can also be very useful for other kinds of applications such as editing photos and images. For example, you could have the photo you are working on displayed on one monitor and your image editing menus, drawing tools and special effects on another.

Use multiple monitors to help you create music by having your audio timeline on one monitor and your audio mixers and sources displayed on the other.

Multiple monitors are also applicable for spicing up a variety of more mundane office tasks. You could have your Excel spreadsheet on one monitor and on the other be checking your e-mail.

Or, as I like to do when I am doing online research and writing articles, have one window for Word, for writing, and then have the other windows open to a cascading series of web sites. I can then find the info I want on one monitor and then move it to the other as needed.