

COMPUTER TRADE SHOPPER

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REVIEWS

AN OLD IDEA IN NEW CLOTHES

The proposition is simple: why buy a TV and a monitor when you could have both? Why choose a TV card, which involves opening the lid of your machine, when you can purchase a standalone box that can be plugged into CRT and LCD monitors?

The answer to all of these problems is the FlyTV-Box EZ. It is compatible with CRT and LCD monitors and for anyone with a Freeview box the appearance of the device is roughly similar, with a box and remote control being all you need to get going. The reason for the growth in these types of devices is that people want to enjoy multimedia without the hassle of having to buy numerous screens and devices.

If it is easy then naturally people will flock to it — and the FlyTV-Box EZ is certainly easy. It allows you to watch TV, play TV games and video — all the things you would expect to be able to do on a TV. I can hear the dissenters straight away, with some doubters arguing that the price of a flexible solution is poor resolution. That certainly was true of TV cards in the past, with problems occurring the minute you tried to take the screen size up above the normal small window provided.

This is different. Here the expectation is that the box will be used to get a large image and the resolution is therefore good enough to support that and can handle DVD output. All you need to get the most out of it is an outdoor ariel or cable connection, a VGA/SVGA/XGA compatible

monitor and speakers. All the bits and bobs you might need, including the remote control, are included in the package, making it a genuine plug-and-play product.

The great thing about this product is that on one level you are tempted to think 'so what?' because it is producing a result that has been possible, although in a less powerful form, for quite some time. But on an other level you realise that of course, this is what multimedia is all about.

No one wants complications. No one wants poor resolution and disappointments, and do you know anyone that wants

both of the above for an extortionate price? You get two main choices with technology. Either sit down and invent something new or sit down, take something old and make it better.

The technology that enables people to enjoy using their PC monitor for other uses is not new, but it has needed updating. Small windows with poor resolution that were only produced after the tin on the lid of the PC was taken off really isn't what people want.

Lots of magazines review products on the basis of criteria, and if we did the same then it would be possible to say that this deserves top marks for ease of use, the idea and performance.

This issue's prize for improving a product that needed dragging into this century is easily the FlyTV-Box EZ.

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DETAILS

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