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TIP OF THE MONTH

LCD vs. DLP

DLP (Digital Light Processing) manufactured by Texas Instruments is the main competitor of LCD projectors. The structure of each technology is different; whereas LCD projectors have 3 distinct glass panels that allow light to pass through or be blocked, DLP projectors have a reflective, mirrored surface on which light passes or is blocked. These structural differences result in advantages and disadvantages to both types of projectors.

LCD projectors have better color saturation, deliver a sharper image and are more light efficient than DLP projectors which makes LCD the preferred projector for displaying data.

DLP projectors, meanwhile, tend to be lighter, have better contrast and reduced pixilation which makes DLP the preferred technology for home theater systems.

If you are leaning towards DLP, look for a 4x rotation speed which will help eliminate the "rainbow effect" (caused by a lower refresh rate). If you are leaning towards LCD, look for XGA or WXGA resolution to reduce visible pixilation.

LCD Projectors ... Looking Good!

Ask anyone who has recently attended a conference about the audiovisual presentations and they are likely to say, "Loved the Power Point". Seems like everyone is switching from slide projectors to LCD projectors for good reason; the picture is brighter, they are easier to configure and use, and more reliable because you don't have to worry about one of your slides showing up upside down ...!

There are many features to look into when purchasing an LCD (Liquid Crystal Display) projector but the three most important are: **brightness, weight, and price**. There are others of course, which we will touch on in this newsletter, but most people will not buy a machine unless they're satisfied with these three features.

Brightness – refers to the number of lumens; the more lumens, the brighter the picture, the better the image (generally). When considering the brightness factor, also consider the lamp life since you will notice a degradation in quality the longer you use it. A lamp life of 2000 hours is a good marker to shoot for so you won't have to replace the bulb as often (especially if you use it all the time).

Weight - manufacturers have coined a phrase: brightness-to-weight ratio. Basically, the more lumens the heavier the projector so most people have a brightness-to-weight ratio that has to be considered. If you need excellent light output, you will have to accept that the projector will weigh a bit more than a projector

WWW (Websites Worth Watching)

1. www.projectorcentral.com - Good overview of LCD projectors with focus on home theater systems.
2. www.archives.gov/aad - U.S. National Archives and Records Administration - over 50 million records to search.
3. www.biography.com/features/mother/ - Read about 100 famous Moms and add your own. Happy Mom's Day!

that isn't as bright. Ex: a projector that weighs 2 pounds on average has a lumen output of around 800 ANSI. Not the best by far. If you move up to 4 - 5 pounds, though, you can find projectors with a lumen output of around 1500 ANSI which is very good.

Price - Fortunately, there are many choices on the market today so finding a projector with most, if not all of the features you've been dreaming about, should be fairly easy. Since there is a very large gap in price from below \$1,000 to the tens of thousands of dollars, do some research and become familiar with what is available. Projector lamp bulbs range from around \$250 - \$600 so look at the bulb life expectancy and price of the bulb before purchasing and factor in this cost over the lifetime of the unit.

Additional Specifications

Scaling / Resolution – Scaling refers to how the projector interprets the information from the computer. If the resolution of your projector is either higher or lower than the capabilities of the computer, then scaling occurs, which results in a distorted or fuzzy image. Projectors have one native resolution (like LCD monitors) so make sure that your computer and projector are compatible. Two of the more common resolutions for LCD projectors are:

XGA - 1,024 x 768 (Better) - Good for CAD or high end graphics

SVGA - 800 x 600 (Good) - Good for PowerPoint presentations

Image quality – aka uniformity rating. Look for a value of 85 – 95%

Contrast ratio – the higher the better. Look for a contrast ratio of at least 400:1

Keystoneing – Refers to whether or not the image projected on a screen is rectangular (which is ideal). If the image is not rectangular, then it will appear skewed with the edges of the image appearing to be different lengths. To solve this problem, two methods have been devised:

Lens shift – the optics shift slightly to allow the image to compensate for its skewed position. This is the better option but is available in relatively few machines.

Digital keystone correction – the image is compressed so that the sides of the image are even. The majority of projectors will use this method.

Warranty – Tell tale sign of a good manufacturer. Some warranties are for 1 year; others are for 3 years while some offer toll-free support and free replacement of damaged items. Look closely at the warranty if you're having trouble deciding between two units.

Before making your final decision, ask yourself a few questions:

1. Will I be using this projector in a larger room? If so, the larger the room, the brighter the projector you want.
2. Will I need to carry the projector long distances? If so, weight will be an important factor.
3. Have I recently been to a conference and really liked the audiovisual presentation (hint: not just the content)? Find out what projector they used and consider purchasing the same one if the features match your needs.
4. And finally, can I really live with my slide projector for another month? If not, there are plenty of projectors on the market right now. Do a little research and you'll be the talk of the afternoon.