

Pictureboy creates a unique place for NEC displays in its photography operation

Quick Facts

Facility: Pictureboy Creative

Location: Elk Grove Village, IL

Challenge: Final-image quality for review during photo shoots/Mobility of displays for use during photo shoots on location

Solution: 24" NEC MultiSync LCD2490WUXi

Date: Fall 2007

A professional photographer always welcomes the challenge of creating bold, bright and beautiful images. But during pre-shot setup, if the monitor doesn't show the image at its best, the final product will never be close to perfect. Since Pictureboy Creative photographers expect the color in a photograph to be precise when it is taken, they wanted to be able to see their image as close to post-production quality as possible while still in the midst of a photo shoot.

Pictureboy Creative, which specializes in commercial advertising with its photography, has been in business in the Chicago suburbs since 1980, working both in their studio and on location. The company brings technical expertise, top-of-the-line equipment and a creative vision to its diverse client base.

The Challenge

Using monitors that display precise images is one challenge Pictureboy has faced as they had been

using 21" CRT monitors, which didn't provide consistent color performance from one to the next. Photographers were growing concerned because their displays were unable to show their images' true colors, making the photo shoot process more difficult than it should have been. Specifically, the CRT models produced color shifts and were unpredictable. Pictureboy wanted to be able to see the image they were shooting as close as possible to what it would look like as a final product. Perhaps the most frustrating issue was working on an image on one monitor, then moving to a second monitor and seeing completely different color representations.

For the past few years, Pictureboy had been looking to make the switch to LCD displays, which feature color spectrums and color management technology that would show their photos accurately and consistently. With color correctness being the photographer's responsibility, maintaining properly calibrated monitors was also vital for the company. "Clients expect to get color-exact images

whether we're on location or in the studio," said Tom Balla, owner and head photographer of Pictureboy Creative. "Having the ability to make all our monitors calibrated identically is essential, and we did not consistently have this capability with our CRT models."

Unfortunately, in their search, Pictureboy's photographers came up short in finding LCDs monitors that met their performance requirements.

Another issue Pictureboy had to consider was the fact that half of its work was being done



Using NEC's widescreen 24" NEC MultiSync LCD2490WUXi during its studio and on-location photo shoots, Pictureboy Creative is able to take advantage of flawless, consistent images due to a set calibration point and an accurate color spectrum.



The MultiSync LCD2490WUXi, which acts as a "large Polaroid" for photographers during shoots, has been the perfect solution for on-location jobs. Its detachable base (top left) provides an easier, safer means of transporting the display.

outside the studio. Transported in an 18-foot trailer and toted on mobile carts, all of the photographers' equipment needed to be portable. Mobility is an essential component for Pictureboy's business, and the CRT models, which were awkward to transport due to their considerable size and weight, were not making it any easier. Finding lightweight LCD displays that met its color performance and portability requirements would be the answer to these problems.

The Solution

As Pictureboy photographers continued to seek out LCD displays as replacements to their CRTs, they came upon NEC's MultiSync 90 Series. They discovered that these LCDs had all the features they were looking for in a display and more, including a base that easily detaches from the display. After testing a demo unit, Pictureboy purchased four 24" widescreen MultiSync LCD2490WUXi units to solve its problems of calibration and mobility. Three of the four displays are used on carts around the studio and on location, and all have been calibrated identically so image consistency is exact. "The display acts as a large Polaroid for us when we are shooting," said Balla. "It allows us to view and evaluate images in their true colors."

The LCD2490WUXi also solved Pictureboy's mobility issue. Connected to a laptop, these devices fit comfortably on the top of a mobile cart, making the photographers' travels much easier. Since the laptop's screen quality isn't good enough to judge an image's colors and contrast, it is necessary to bring the LCD display along to photo shoots. The display itself allows photographers a separate space for viewing, so all digital work can be done directly from the laptop.

The display also rotates between landscape and portrait orientations, which is a helpful feature in their operation. As they photograph, clients can see, via the NEC display, what the image

will look like when output. In addition, the light, ultra-thin-frame displays easily detach from their base, making it a snap to store on the cart's lower shelf and transport to and from the studio without the worry of irreparable damage to the screen. "The quick-release base is an excellent feature that we really can't live without," added Balla.

Since color is such a critical focus in their line of work, Pictureboy photographers have benefited from the switch to LCDs and now enjoy a more accurate color spectrum. The LCD2490WUXi has features that help in their daily operation, including the set calibration point and sharpness tool, which allow photographers to optimize for final output. The studio's calibrated NEC displays show clear and flawless images with detailed color fidelity, as they can now easily perform black point and white point calibration.

"NEC's displays provide the most accurate colors we've ever seen," said Balla. "As we're shooting we have confidence in knowing that no matter what image we're looking at on any display, we know the colors are going to match. We will put our four calibrated NEC monitors in line, and it's amazing how identical they look."

Pictureboy photographers check their displays' calibration every month to verify that all are the same, so no matter which one is being used, their images will look perfectly identical. This allows the company to function seamlessly, with photographers never having to worry about the color quality of the abundance of images they work with on a daily basis.

"We've gained so much with NEC's product," said Balla. "Our four MultiSync LCD2490WUXi monitors display brilliant colors and possess important features necessary to our field. I can't imagine working without them. They've been perfect, and we'll be staying with NEC forever."