

5 Reasons You Don't Need a Second Monitor

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1. More screens mean more money

The first thing most people consider when deciding to add another monitor is the price. Monitors with more advanced features like OLED, high resolution, or high refresh rate can be quite expensive.

While Apple's expensive Pro Display XDR starts at \$4,999, even more standard monitors can cost more. Plus, it's easy to make a mistake and waste money buying the wrong monitor.

2. Additional monitors take up desk space



In addition to the added cost, additional monitors take up more desk space. Many people also prefer not to use monitor stands to free up desk space, even if they can afford it. However, for those who do use stands, the monitors still take up space. In any case, more monitors mean less usable desk space.

3. Additional monitors may cause lag

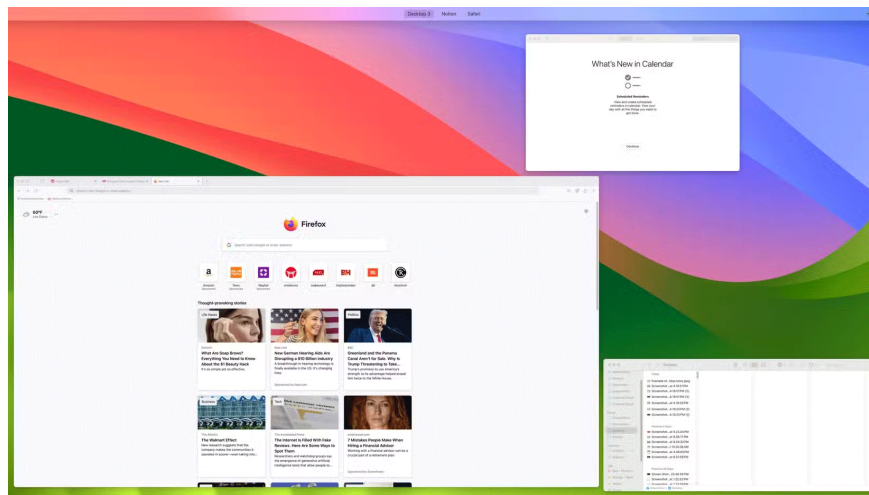
In addition to taking up more desk space, additional monitors take up more system bandwidth, which is one of the main considerations when buying a monitor for a laptop. Having an extra monitor makes little difference, but the way most people use additional monitors can put a lot of strain on the system.

Note : When you have multiple monitors, you tend to open more applications at the same time than when you only use one monitor.

The classic example of a YouTube video or Twitch stream on one monitor while playing a game on another means that the system resources are shared between both tasks at the same time. In my experience, playing resource-intensive games while running video often results in dropped frame rates and lag in the video.

Likewise, even when using multiple displays for an intended, productive use case like editing video on one display while browsing footage stored on the MacBook display, the system is still slower than when performing each of those tasks on just one display.

4. Most operating systems have great multi-monitor tools



While we often use extra screens to multitask between apps, most modern operating systems have great tools for virtual desktops. Mac users are probably most familiar with this feature, using a three-finger swipe on the trackpad to switch between desktops and arrange apps, but Windows 11 has this feature too.

Tip : Virtual desktops allow you to quickly switch between multiple windows and applications without the need for an additional physical monitor.

Using multiple desktops and quick touchpad gestures, you can complete the task of browsing available footage while editing video just as quickly as you would on multiple monitors - possibly faster due to the reduced system burden of not using an additional monitor.

Some tasks are still best done when you can see multiple physical monitors, but many tasks are equally convenient when using virtual desktops instead of additional monitors.

5. Multiple screens are distracting



No matter how many screens you have, you can only really pay attention to one of them at a time. Having more things open and displayed on multiple screens makes it much easier to lose focus.

Many people have found that there are major drawbacks to focusing when using multiple monitors. If you have a video playing while playing a game, you will find that your gaming performance will suffer and you will not be able to remember much of the video. So when you need to focus the most, unplug the extra monitor from your laptop and go to a coffee shop or library to focus.

Secondary monitors are useful for many tasks, but there are some trade-offs when using them, both financial, physical, system-wise, and mentally. Anyone considering a second monitor should try virtual desktop tools first and plan exactly how you will use the second or third monitor!

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