

5 ways to turn an old computer monitor into a useful device.

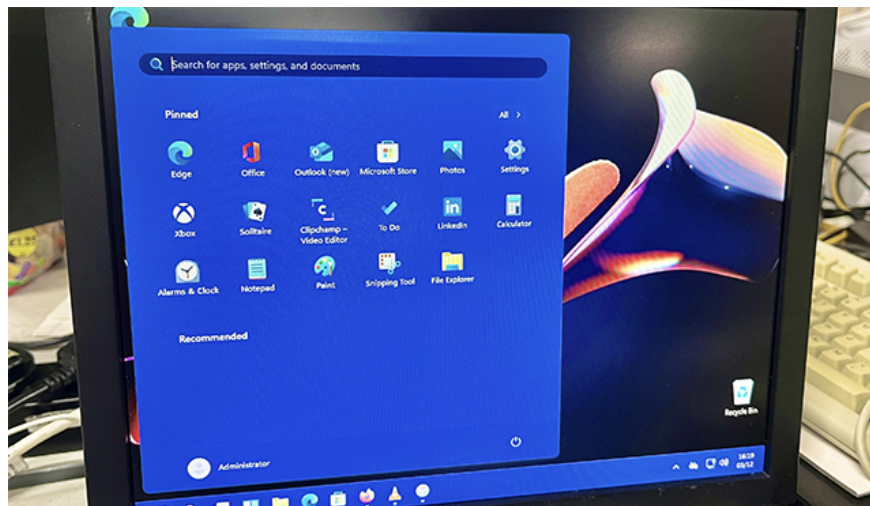
Here are 5 creative ways to recycle: Transform it into a security camera, smart home dashboard, digital photo frame, mini TV, or smart mirror.

After an upgrade, an old computer monitor that's still working well is often left unused and gathering dust. Besides obvious uses like a secondary display or a monitor for a backup Mini PC, there are many creative ways to repurpose an old monitor into entirely new roles, providing practical value and saving costs.

Here are five of the most useful and creative ways to repurpose your retired computer monitor.

5 Methods to Reuse Old Computer Monitors

Turn old monitors into surveillance devices.



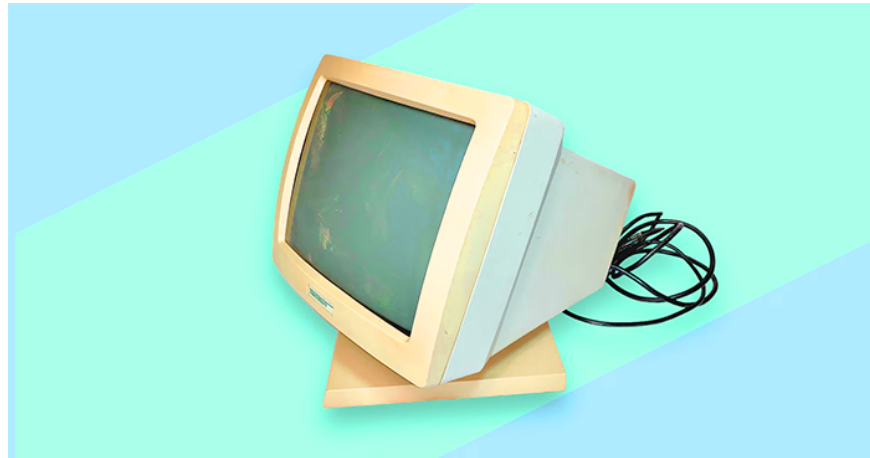
If the monitor is still functioning properly, it can be integrated into a home security system to provide a continuous, visual overview of the area being monitored.

Purpose: To provide real-time, continuous peace of mind for camera feeds, eliminating the need to switch apps on your phone or browser on your main PC.

How to do it:

1. Connect the monitor to a Network Video Recorder (NVR), DVR, or a compact Mini PC.
2. Once connected, place the monitor in a convenient location (e.g., desk, living room) to monitor the front gate, backyard, or other important areas.
3. A backup keyboard or mouse can be added to control the camera feed and review footage.

Transform it into a Smart Home Dashboard.



The old-fashioned screen is the perfect always-on information assistant for your home.

Purpose: To display important aggregated information such as weather forecasts, personal schedules, latest news headlines, and to-do lists in a central location (e.g., kitchen, hallway).

How to do it:

1. A compact computing device like a Raspberry Pi or Mini PC is needed to deliver the content.
2. Use web-based dashboard creation platforms like DAKboard (which offers many pre-designed layouts) or other custom solutions.
3. Note: Most PC monitors do not support touch, so interaction with the dashboard will be limited to mouse/keyboard or a connected mobile device.

Recreate it into a digital photo frame.

Transform your slim screen into a rotating photo gallery, showcasing your most memorable moments.

Purpose: To create a continuously rotating photo gallery for travel memories, family photos, pets, or digital artwork.

How to do it:

1. This method works best with thin screens that can be permanently mounted on the wall.
2. Use a Raspberry Pi or Mini PC running simple slideshow software (e.g., Google Photos or dedicated slideshow applications).

3. Ensure that the screen's brightness and color temperature are adjusted to be natural and suitable for the space where the screen is placed.

Use it as a mini TV with a streaming device.



If you don't want the screen to be just for decoration, turning it into a compact TV can be a very satisfying upgrade.

Purpose: To provide a small-scale entertainment source for spaces such as kitchen counters, offices, dorm rooms, or storage rooms.

How to do it:

1. All you need is a low-cost streaming device like Roku, Fire TV, Chromecast, or Apple TV (these devices are usually plug-and-play).
2. Plug the streaming device into the monitor's input port (usually HDMI) and connect the power supply.
3. **Audio Note:** Since most PC monitors don't have built-in speakers, you'll need to add a soundbar or a pair of external (powered bookshelf speakers) speakers for sound.

DIY Project: Smart Mirror or Lightbox

For those who love DIY projects, old monitors are a great material.

Smart Mirror:

1. Combine the screen with a two-way glass mirror and a wooden frame/DIY accessories.
2. When switched on, the display shows useful information (time, weather) hovering above the reflective surface. When switched off, it becomes a stylish decorative item.

Lightbox – For damaged screens:

1. If the screen is damaged and unusable for the above purposes, the components can be disassembled, leaving only the backlight panel.

2. Adding an LED strip light transforms it into a lightbox for filming, streaming, or photography purposes.

Reusing old electronic devices not only brings satisfaction but is also an environmentally responsible act. Don't limit your creativity to just screens; many other old devices like tablets, routers, or smartphones can also be repurposed in unique ways.

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