

Re: Switch box for four PC's / USB and DVI

Source:

<http://www.tech-archive.net/Archive/WinXP/microsoft.public.windowsxp.hardware/2008-11/msg00538.html>

- *From:* Paul <nospam@xxxxxxxxxxx>
 - *Date:* Wed, 19 Nov 2008 04:02:41 -0500
-

Tim_Ver wrote:

I have four PC's now and want to use just on large flat panel I have and one Wireless mouse and keyboard (Microsoft). The Monitor is DVI and the keyboard and mouse is PS2/USB. So I would like a good USB/DVI switchbox. Only thing is that one PC (main one) is DVI and the other three are just VGA. So not sure how to get the best solution here. Also main one is Vista and other 3 are XP Pro.

Please chime in with ideas and help.

Thanks

If it was my problem to solve, I would design the computing environment around the KVM, and not the other way around.

1) Add a video card to the "DVI" only computer. That assumes the PC is as described, and has a DVI-D connector. If it has DVI-I, you can use a DVI-I to VGA dongle (passive adapter) to select the analog signals that have always been present on the connector. More details on DVI, DVI-I, DVI-D etc, here.

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Digital_Visual_Interface

The analog signals are carried on the "four dots plus bar" seen in the picture of the connectors. C1, C2, C3 are analog red, green, blue and are the basis of a VGA analog output. A DVI-I to VGA dongle, carries signals from C1, C2, C3, C4, and pin 8, to deliver RGBHV to the VGA connector. If the computer really lacks analog capability, the DVI connector would be missing a significant part of the "four dots plus bar" thing. So have a look at it first, before wasting a lot of money.

2) Change the monitor to VGA. Or, inspect the monitor carefully, to see if it has a VGA connector. The cheapest monitors now, are DVI only. So you may have to go "slightly upscale" on a

Re: Switch box for four PC's / USB and DVI

monitor, to get what you need. Even in the current times, I find a DVI only monitor to be limiting. It should have interfaces for both VGA and DVI, to avoid expensive external conversions. For example, you can get VGA to DVI converters, but they cost more than a new monitor in some cases.

Once you've converted all the I/O to common formats, then the selection of KVM will be easier. KVMs have atrocious documentation, and even for simple questions about conversions and the like, I'm not finding answers. KVMs can be very expensive. If I was to pass any advice to you of value at all, it would be to buy the KVM from a company that accepts returns, even for a modest restocking fee. You could easily be disappointed in the performance of the box, and need to return it. For example, some of them manage to solve all the I/O problems, but have problems switching from one computer to the next. If it takes 20 seconds for the box to respond to a hot key, you're not going to use it for very long. Not all of the products have customer reviews, so it is hard to get any realistic feedback on some of them.

I don't know what to make of the wireless keyboard and mouse requirement. The receiver plugs into a USB port, and I understand a wireless keyboard and mouse can work at the BIOS level, so perhaps that qualifies them to be considered to be "USB keyboard and mouse". I would much rather have a hard wired set, to improve the chances of seamless operation.

Paul

.