

AOC 2230Fm

When is a monitor no longer just a monitor? According to AOC, it's when you add the capability of playing media without connecting it to a PC. Is the 22-inch 2230Fm LCD monitor also the world's biggest MP3 player?

By Jan Birkeland | Tuesday, 30 September, 2008



MULTI-MONITOR: The media player makes the 2230Fm stand out in a sea of monitors, by adding something great onto something already good.

When is a monitor no longer just a monitor? According to AOC, it's when you add the capability of playing media without connecting it to a PC. The 2230Fm encompasses that concept, and it certainly adds something new to what is already a good LCD monitor.

Let's look at the monitor itself first. AOC has produced a good looking unit, but the black piano finish smudges easily and causes too much reflection. I'm not taking anything away from the product; I'm just a bit over everything having to be dipped in shiny, piano black finish. Monitors should, by default, have a matt bezel that enhances the focus on image quality.

The 2230 has a welcomed 2ms response time, so it would double as a good gaming monitor. And in fact, both games and DVDs ran fine on the monitor, with little ghosting or blurring. There was also very little backlight bleeding, and the glare panel certainly helped when viewing movies in a well lit room.

AOC measure the brightness at 300cd/m² (candelas per square metre), which is typical for a mid-range LCD monitor in this price bracket. The contrast ratio is a massive 20,000:1, but keep in mind that most manufacturers measure contrast differently, rendering these figures meaningless for any kind of comparison between makes. It will still pay to find a store where you can compare the monitor side by side with others.

The 2230's main claim to fame, however, is the built-in media player that functions without the need for a PC. All you need is some kind of storage device to put your media on – either a USB key, or a memory card (SD, MMC, MS or XD). You can also use a powered external hard drive, although the monitor doesn't have enough power to drive an external hard drive through USB. In addition, the 2230 has a 2-port USB hub and 3.5mm jacks for headphones and speakers.

The media player is controlled either via a bundled remote control, or by using the control wheel located on the front of the bezel. The media player interface is straightforward and easy to use. The monitor itself doesn't raise or turn, but it does tilt slightly. In addition to VGA and DVI inputs, the 2230 has an HDMI input so you could connect your HD devices to it as well.

Overall, the 2230Fm plays to a relatively small market. Gamers and purists will look elsewhere for a monitor, and the core audience is likely to include families or light users looking for a monitor to run in the kids' bedroom. That said, we think the perfect place for the monitor would be in the kitchen, perhaps hooked up to a small media box. The price is a little high, but the added features are worth it.

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RRP incl GST: \$599

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A good monitor with a lot of extra features. While not for everyone, the innovation makes it worth its price.

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