AV Macintosh: Tips for Better NTSC output (2/95)

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TOPIC ---

This article provides some tips and hints on obtaining better NTSC video output
using a Power Macintosh AV or Quadra AV series computer.

DISCUSSION --

Most Macintosh AV series computer owners are concerned with the quality of NTSC
video output. Usually comparisons are made between an RGB monitor and a TV or
NTSC monitor. Unfortunately, quality is limited by the NTSC standard itself. The
standard was developed nearly 40 years ago and is outdated when compared to the
more recent RGB standard. Since the NTSC video standard is drastically different
from the RGB standard in the way it addresses video signals, there are some
steps to follow to get the best looking Macintosh graphics on an NTSC device.
Most Macintosh presentation applications recommend the following for best
results:

• View your work on an NTSC monitor while creating the graphics.
  You will spot any problems as they are created.

• Stay well within the NTSC "safe zone" of 512 x 384 screen resolution
  (85% of the screen size.

• Avoid one-pixel wide horizontal lines. All lines should be at least
  two pixels wide and have an even number of lines.

• Do not use contrasting colors in adjoining areas. Buffer contrasting
  colors with a couple of lines of a neutral intermediate color.

• Instead of pure white, use light shades of gray.

• Use at least 24 point font size for titles.

• If titles are overlaid on video, use contrasting colors for the titles.
  If the video image is light, use dark letters, and if the video image
  is dark, use light letters. You can avoid the problem completely by
  displaying your letters on a solid background color, or contrasting
  drop shadow.

- Use solid colors to avoid flicker. For example, change the desktop
  pattern to a solid gray if you are displaying or recording the Finder
  on NTSC video.

- Do not use dithered patterns, or patterns that have alternating dots
  or lines.

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08 Feb 1995 - Added keyword; made several technical updates.

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