

**KVM / VGA
multiplexer?
Originated
on March 1,
2011**

Originated from Ben Jokinen (MLML) on March 1, 2011

Hello Everyone,

I am looking into purchasing a VGA / DVI multiplexer so that I can display multiple (~6) computer's screens onto one large flat-screen monitor simultaneously as well as switch between them and display only one when focusing on a certain data acquisition computer. Does anyone have a product they are using to do this or that they can recommend? I have found a few 4-way KVM-style switches that seem to fit the bill and I am aware of other KVM capabilities for switching between multiple monitors but have not found one that will work with 6+ inputs and display all 6 simultaneously.

Any help would be greatly appreciated!

Thank you,

Ben

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Reply from Webb Pinner on March 1, 2011

Ben,

Two products that came to mind (but I have no personal experience with) for your multi-viewer solution:

Apantac DE-8 - 8 DVI, VGA, YPbPr, YC, Composite, HDMI, SD-SDI/HD-SDI Multiviewer
~\$7700.00

<http://www.apantac.com/product-info.php?id=118>
- 8 DVI/VGA inputs, 2 DVI Outputs

Epiphan VGA-Grid ~\$9800.00
<http://www.epiphan.com/products/broadcasting/vga-grid/>
- 6 VGA Inputs, 1 VGA output

What these devices will NOT do is provide a VGA loop-through which would allow the inputs to be passed on to a separate KVM switch. Instead you will need to by DVI or VGA DAs depending on the source input type for each computer. DVI DAs are ~\$275.00/ea, VGA DAs ~\$125.00/ea

As for a KVM solution, I have had great success with products from Raritan. You may want to look at the MasterConsole CAT 28 or 216. This comes in an 8 or 16 input, 2 output configuration. It only handles VGA inputs ~\$1000.00

<http://www.raritan.com/products/analog-kvm/masterconsole-cat/>

In my humble opinion you might consider not using the large display as the status screen and KVM user station but instead use a second smaller (~24") as the dedicated KVM station. This way the large display would always provide status info regardless of if someone was using the KVM station (or forgot to log out). I would also recommend sticking with VGA signals rather than DVI. DVI tends to be finicky especially over long distances and in general more expensive. And again in my humble opinion I see little visual advantage in it unless I'm doing a lot of HD video editing.

After looking at these numbers you might also consider booting the multi-display solution in favor of a bank of cheap 20" monitors (~\$110.00/ea) and unistrut mounts. Either way you'll still need the DAs to get the video signals to the status display(s) and the KVM switch.

-Webb

Webb Pinner

Telepresence Team Lead and shadetree Data Rat

NOAA Ship Okeanos Explorer

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