



MONITOR

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AOC U3477PQU

An upgrade in quality, with a price tag to match.

We're a little over 4K. That first rush of super high-res 4K screens were pretty exciting, but only because they were offering a new resolution we hadn't seen before. Now those 4K screens are securely packed away in the kit cupboard because there's a new wide-boy in town: AOC's U3477PQU.

Our big problem with 4K screens is that there isn't the content yet to justify the step up in resolution and resulting step down in performance. Realistically, moving from a 1440p screen to a 2160p one doesn't currently offer anything other than a drop in frame rates. Your in-game textures are still generally the same scale and won't deliver the visual fidelity promised by the 8MP 4K resolution.

Making the move to a 21:9 aspect ratio though makes a difference that 4K can't yet match. This 34-inch, 3,440 x

1,440 monitor makes for a dramatic gaming experience, but is usable for 'normal' computing too. Early 29-inch 21:9 screens were only 1,080 pixels high, which was far too short to make for a compelling experience outside of gaming. Switching to a 1,440 pixel height though makes even more of a difference than we thought it would.

WIDE AWAKE

The extra demands the super-mega-widescreen native resolution puts on your GPU are nowhere near the frame-rate killing level of 4K. At 2,560 x 1,440 you've got around 3.7MP versus a little under 5MP for the 3,440 x 1,440 res of the AOC. Yes, you will see bit of a performance hit, but not a huge one.

In-game, with that almost wraparound resolution filling your vision, you'll forget about 4K. It's strange, pulling you more fully into the gameworld than the

traditional 16:9.

This isn't the first of the new 34-inch, 21:9 screens we've seen. The LG 34UM95 turned us on to this aspect ratio, but partly because of its Apple-pleasing features like Thunderbolt, it commanded just over a \$1,200 price tag. At around \$200 less, the AOC is a better value proposition. It's still very expensive, but AOC seems to have turned a corner recently and is putting out quality monitors, rather than just cheap ones.

Out-of-the-box image quality has been an issue with past budget AOC screens, but the IPS panel used in the U3477PQU is excellent. The colours and contrast are great as soon as the monitor powers on, and the gradient and white reproduction are similarly good. The black levels get slightly crushed at the lower end, but that is being picky.

The chassis is well made, too. There's a minimal bezel

around the outside of the panel, and the physical buttons on the underside are far easier to use than the touch-sensitive ones some recent screens have shipped with. The OSD is old-school AOC fare, though: functional but little more.

We'd hoped the U3477PQU would be around the same sort of price as AOC's 4K TN monitor, but it's closer to the expensive ASUS RoG Swift PG278Q. That's a shame, but you'll probably forget about that as soon as you start stalking around the new *Alien* with a motion tracker.

■ Dave James

Verdict

Features ★★★★★
Performance ★★★★★
Value ★★★★★

A great-quality panel, offering a really dramatic upgrade from 1440p, but with a super-sized price tag to boot.



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AOC U3477PQU 34" MONITOR

Coming in a box bigger than most stereo systems, the AOC U3477PQU may seem mammoth in comparison to the standard 16:9 screens we are mostly accustomed to, but this ultra wide experience is surprisingly multi-purpose. Once assembled, the monitor is easily adjustable to any height or angle to suit your needs and even allows a full 90 degree adjustment for those that need a profile setup. AOC have all bases covered as far connections are concerned; offering DisplayPort, HDMI, DVI and VGA inputs, and even MHL support for those wanting to use tablets or phones.

The screen is not limited to single inputs at a time either. Straight from the front of the monitor users can select a standard picture in-picture mode offering up a corner of the screen for reference material or some background TV, or a second option is available as well, dividing it in half, ideal for running multiple computers from the same desk. The U3477PQU also comes bundled with software that divides the monitor into four panels to even better utilise the massive amount of screen real estate.

Image quality on the panel is superb, capable of 3440 x 1440 resolution in a 21:9 aspect ratio, the matte screen puts out a 50,000,000:1 dynamic contrast ratio with a 5ms response time. It has a rich and clear panel boasting 1.07 billion colours, using Flicker Free technology to reduce eye strain and help combat fatigue. Its ultra wide IPS display gives a clear visual experience even with multiple people watching the same display, from different angles and works well for all general purpose tasks.

Josh Philpott



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KEY SPECS

21:9 • 4k output • PIP mode • Adjustable and rotatable stand