

Preparing a PC laptop computer for connection to a Computer Projector

Overview:

Although it may appear otherwise, 99% of all technical problems that occur in a presentation with a laptop and a computer projector are attributable to improper settings on the laptop computer. The projector is “dumb” and basically projects anything that is sent to it by the laptop.

Common projection problems are:

- The user does not know how to set the laptop so that an image is sent out to the computer projector.
- The laptop goes to sleep during the presentation and the signal being sent to the projector is terminated.
- The screen saver comes on during a presentation and the signal being sent to the projector is terminated.
- The laptop’s resolution settings are set improperly so that the projector is not being fed the correct image resolution.

Whenever you are going to use your laptop with a computer projector please follow the steps below to ensure that your laptop is ready and able to project. If you are borrowing a laptop from one of our computing departments, make sure you tell the person taking your reservation that you will be hooking the laptop up to a computer projector.

Note: A Dell Inspiron 4000 with Windows professional 2000 and an ATI graphics card was used to prepare this tutorial. Your actual procedure may vary depending on the make of the laptop, the operating system, and the type of graphics card.

Procedure to Connect a Laptop to a NUI Galway Projector

Step 1: Check your power

Always use the laptop’s power adapter when projecting. This will not affect your ability to project, but it will eliminate the possibility of your battery going dead mid-presentation.

Step 2: Set your laptop’s Energy Settings

Set the laptop’s Energy Settings so that the laptop NEVER goes to sleep or into an energy saving mode. If your laptop goes to sleep during your presentation the hard drive will spin down and you will lose your projected image.

To turn off all power saving features:

- Click “Start/settings/control panel/Power options”
- In the “Power options” box choose the “Power Schemes” tab
- Set all 6 pull-down menus to “Never”
- Under “Power Schemes” choose “Save As” and type in the word “projection”
- Click “Apply”
- Click the “Advanced” tab
- Under “When I close the lid of my portable computer” choose “None”.

- Click “OK” to save and exit the “Power Options” menu.

So now every time you use the laptop for projection all you have to do is open the “Power options” window and choose the “Projection” profile under “Power Schemes”.

Step 3. Set the laptop’s Display Settings

Set the laptop’s Display Settings so that the resolution matches the native resolution of the projector. The most common native resolution of our computer projectors is XGA, or 1024 by 768 pixels. You can check the native resolution on our Computer Projection page. To set the resolution:

- Right click on the desktop.
- Click the “Settings” tab.
- Set the “Colors” to “True Color (32 bit)”.
- Set the “Screen area” to “1024X768 pixels”.
- Click “Apply” (if confirmation window opens click “OK”.)
- Click “Advanced”.
- Click “Displays”.
- In the center pane marked “Panel” click the round blue dot so that the Panel is “Primary”.
- Click on the word “Panel”.
- Under “Panel Attributes” make sure “Scale image to panel size” is checked.
- Click “OK”.
- In the left pane marked “Monitor” click the little blue wedge to the left of the word “Monitor” so that an image is displayed on the picture of the little computer monitor.
- In the left pane marked “Monitor” click the round blue dot so that the Monitor is “Secondary”.
- Click “Apply”.
- Click “OK”.

Step 4: Send the image out to the projector

Learn how to send the image out to the projector. Audio Visual includes directions with all its computer projectors instructing the user to do the following things BEFORE you power up your laptop:

- Connect the laptop to the projector with the supplied computer video cable.
- Turn the on the projector
- Ensure the correct source is set on the projector controller P.C. or laptop.
- Now you can turn on your laptop.

If this procedure is followed the laptop will automatically sense the presence of the external projector and send the signal automatically out to the projector.

Troubleshooting Problems

1. When it does not work: For various reasons, including failure to follow the procedure in step #4 above, the user will get an image on either the laptop OR the projector, but not both. In order to turn on both the image to the laptop and the projected image you have to use the laptop's function keys to turn on the display(s).

On a DELL you use the "**Function/F8**" key combination. Pressing this key combination several times (waiting several seconds between pushes) will toggle you through 3 different settings:

- Image on projector only
- Image on laptop only
- Image on both laptop and projector

The Function key combination may vary depending on the make of the laptop computer. Look for a small monitor or the word "LCD" on one of the "F" keys.

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