Easy when you

Know How

When a tiny blemish on his screen makes him see red, **Robert Irvine** attempts to...

Fix a stuck monitor pixel

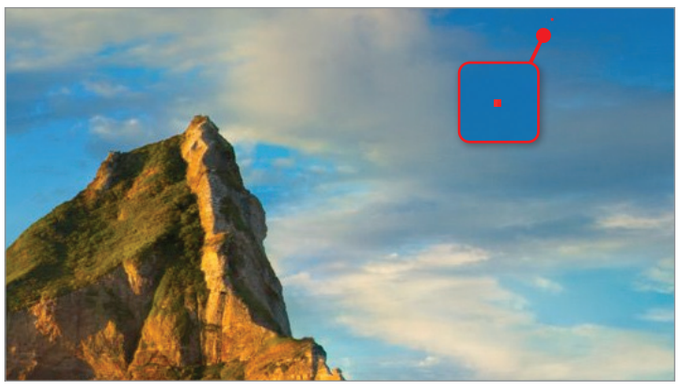
My poor old eyes aren't what they used to be. I know this for a fact because when I went for a check-up at the optician's last week, I struggled to read past the first line on the letter chart (my guesses of '7' and 'pound sign' were way off the mark). I was subsequently prescribed new contact lenses and varifocal glasses, lest I end up having lengthy discussions with pillar boxes, a la Mr Magoo.

> "I suspected the blemish to be splashback from a tomato Cup A Soup"

Staring at my computer screen for long periods hasn't done my vision any favours, but it was on glancing at my monitor this morning that I noticed something was wrong – and not just with my failing peepers. In a random lock-screen photo of some far-flung, idyllic location, there appeared to be a tiny red hole in the deep blue sky. This hole transferred to my desktop after I logged into Windows, and then to pages I viewed in my browser.

Initially, I suspected the blemish to be splashback from a tomato Cup A Soup, but when wiping failed to remove it, I realised the cause was a faulty pixel. Having spent a fair whack at the optician's, the thought of having to buy a new monitor sent chills through my bank balance, so I decided to investigate and hopefully fix this pesky pixel.

The good news was that the pixel wasn't 'dead' – such pixels are black and they ain't coming back. Instead, it was merely 'stuck', which meant it could feasibly be unstuck.



No, it's not Mars, but a broken pixel that was driving Robert to distraction

One suggestion I found online is to apply pressure to the defective pixel using a damp cloth. This apparently induces liquid in its sub-pixels to spread equally and restore the pixel's colour-displaying capabilities. For greater accuracy, you can wrap the cloth around a pointy thing such as a plastic stylus or an "incredibly dull pencil" (bit rude, I'm sure the pencil has many redeeming qualities).

The caveat to using this method is that if you're not careful, it can create more stuck pixels, which was the last thing I needed. Related advice about pressing a hot washcloth against the stuck pixel for a few seconds also sounded risky, so I sought an alternative solution to warm water.

To confirm that there were no other stuck pixels lurking on my screen, I ran the free online tool LCD Dead Pixel Test (www.snipca.com/37215). This provides full-screen test pages with solid background colours (black, red, white, green or blue) that instantly show up misbehaving pixels. Fortunately, my monitor had just the one, but unfortunately the tool couldn't fix it.

JScreenFix flashes a combination of colours to jar stuck monitor pixels back to life

For that purpose, I visited a widely recommended site called JScreenFix (www.jscreenfix.com), which claims to fix stuck pixels on "most screens". This was very easy (and free!) to use: I simply clicked the Launch JScreenFix button on the homepage to open the 'pixel fixer' tool against a black background. As instructed, I dragged the fixer – which consists of a square of flashing pixels, similar to static on an old TV – over the stuck pixel, and left it there for the advised 10 minutes.

I didn't really understand why this would work, but according to an article on WikiHow (www.snipca.com/37216), JScreenFix's random combination of red, green and blue hues can "jar the stuck pixel back into its usual cycle".

In any case, after leaving the square for half an hour (to be on the safe side), I closed the fixer and – success! – the red pixel had gone.

There's no guarantee JScreenFix will work for all stuck pixels, but it's certainly worth a try. See you next issue (eyes permitting).

Need help with any non-functioning pixels on your monitor?
Let us know: noproblem@computeractive.co.uk

Next issue: Robert combines multiple emails into one inbox