

## NEC MT1075 Review

By Jeff Sauer

*Lots of innovation in a conference-room projector.*

Projectors have become increasingly and predictably smaller and brighter over the last decade. More recently, many manufacturers have turned to ease-of-use advancements as a way to add value and differentiate products. That has meant everything from more intuitive onscreen menus and automated setup features like auto-keystone correction to remote LAN connectivity. It's all included with the intent of helping projector users work more comfortably and efficiently.



**NEC MT1075**

NEC is certainly no stranger to the trend. Its latest conference-room series projector, the MT1075, continues it. The MT1075 really is more than an example; it's more like a poster child for feature innovation. A new projector often will come out of a single innovation, but NEC seems to have thrown just about everything at the MT1075. Admittedly, a few of the features might be more useful in travel projectors, but it's hard to complain about innovation that's thoughtful and often very clever.

### NUTS AND BOLTS

The 13lb. MT1075 is housed in a solid, if unspectacular looking, rectangular chassis in NEC's typical off-white, curved-corners design. Menu controls are on top, and thorough connections are in the back. It has DVI, 15-pin RGB, and 5×BNC for a second analog RGB and component video. There's a 15-pin monitor output, as well as S-Video, composite, and multiple RCA (video inputs) and mini (data inputs) audio inputs. Serial nine-pin and USB add control and remote mouse functionality. Interestingly, the included remote has two modes that use a small number of buttons to offer both remote mouse controls and menu controls in a very straightforward design.

The MT1075 also includes a couple of PC Card slots. Those have been around for several years to enable so-called "PC-free" presentations, as well as to update splash screen logos and graphics. More recently, PC Cards have been used for Wireless Networking cards, and NEC supports them all here. In fact, when you add either a wired or wireless LAN card the MT1075 offers remote administration and monitoring, including the ability to configure the projector to send email automatically to as many as three recipients in case of trouble, or to monitor lamp life.

The PC Card slot also can be used for security. By entering the ID information of a registered PC Card, the MT1075 can be configured to operate only when that card is installed. Like many "security" features, however, that's not much of a theft deterrent unless the potential thief can somehow be educated to know that they'd be stealing something that doesn't work. The MT1075 also can be locked down simply with a password.

That's all pretty good stuff, and arguably a fair value at an expected \$5,495 street price. But it's not the fun stuff.

## INNOVATION

The MT1075 has a lens with power focus and zoom. NEC cleverly combines that with the auto-focus technology of a typical digital camera. Quite astutely, NEC asks, "If \$100 cameras can auto-focus, why can't a \$5,000 projector?" But that's not the only thing NEC has done. Auto-focus also has been linked with NEC's 3D Reform for automatic cornerstone adjustment. It's been a couple of years since NEC introduced built-in 3D Reform to some projector models for diagonally off-axis projection. It's a helpful feature in difficult setup situations, but it's a pain in the neck to make adjustments manually. Now, with a touch of a button the MT1075 automatically displays a grid of points and matches it to a rectangular screen. It takes a few seconds, but it's done.

The major caveat to automatic 3D Reform is that the projector's sensor has to find a solid black border within which to work. The border must be dark and distinct but not too thick to obscure grid points either inside or outside the screen area. Otherwise, there is no frame of reference. It also works best if the screen is a different color from the background. Still, if you've ever tried to adjust manually for off-axis viewing, you can appreciate that this can be a major time saver.

Even more practically, the MT1075 has a built-in light meter that effectively performs a white balance on the projection surface and adjusts automatically for a non-white wall. By running through a quick cycle of primary color flash frames, the projector can recalculate white and adjust the picture. NEC calls this Auto-Wall Correction, and it makes almost any wall or surface a potential projection screen, whether it's a slightly off-white wall or whiteboard, some other painted color, or an old blackboard. Not surprisingly, I found that this Wall Correction adjustment works better on surfaces without texture variations or patterns. NEC also warns against glossy or reflective surfaces, but in my testing the MT1075 displayed a pretty nice picture on everything from a cement-block wall to an old cardboard box. As the huge majority of projector users never venture into the on-screen menus at all to adjust color, this will be a huge step forward in many situations. You can also save up to four user settings.

## PERFORMANCE

Of course, a projector still needs to perform well and display a strong image under controlled circumstances, and the MT1075 does that too. NEC claims a maximum brightness of 4200 ANSI lumens, and that's a little high. My measurement of 3769 lumens is just about 10 percent below the spec, and that is, unfortunately, very consistent with today's industry reporting practices. (Until recently, NEC eschewed these practices in favor of straight reporting.) NEC's Eco-mode drops brightness to about 2880 lumens, but also drops fan noise by almost one-half and extends lamp life by some 50 percent, according to NEC. An optional long-life lamp is available for the MT1075 that reduces brightness even further, but offers double the life of the standard lamp. I did not test that lamp.

I measured a very strong contrast ratio of 261:1 against the ANSI checkerboard and 801:1 full on/off and that, refreshingly, is exactly as NEC reports it (800:1). More importantly, it's a very good number for an LCD-based projector. As is typical of NEC products in my experience, color temperature is very consistent across the image and over a range of grayscale values, and color reproduction is very good.

With all its new features, it's easy to get excited about a projector like the MT1075 simply because it's something a little different. Obviously, Auto-Wall Correction and automatic 3D Reform are going to be less important for carefully installed projectors that rarely move between rooms. Indeed, both of those features would be more appropriate in road-warrior travel projectors than conference-room models. But, that's splitting hairs. NEC deserves credit for the innovation and surely will migrate these features to other models over time.

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And even without the novelties, the MT1075 is a well-performing projector with a reasonable price. With practical options like a 4,000-hour long life lamp, thorough connectivity options, remote administration and monitoring features, and wireless networking, the MT1075 delivers solid performance with plenty of user flexibility.