SOFTWARE & TECH

Print Screen With Dual Monitors

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Mastering the Art of the Print Screen With Dual Monitors

In today's digital workspace, dual monitors have become the norm for productivity, creative workflows, and even casual computing. Stretching your tasks across two screens is a game-changer—until you need to capture exactly what's on your displays. The humble **Print Screen** key suddenly seems less straightforward when you have two monitors. How do you grab the content from both screens, or just one? If you've ever struggled with **print screen with dual monitors**, you're not alone. This comprehensive guide will walk you through every method, tool, and tip to take perfect screenshots across multiple displays, whether you use Windows, macOS, or third-party utilities. By the end, you'll feel confident capturing exactly what you need—no more guesswork, no more half-cropped images.

Understanding the Print Screen Key and Dual Monitor Behaviour

Before diving into specific methods, it helps to know how your operating system handles the Print Screen key when two monitors are connected. When you press the **PrtScn** (Print Screen) button on a standard keyboard, your computer copies an image of everything visible on all connected screens into the clipboard. This means that on a dual-monitor setup, pressing **PrtScn**captures both monitors as one wide image. That can be exactly what you want—or it can be a headache if you only intended to capture one screen.

Other built-in shortcuts behave differently:

- Alt + PrtScn – Captures only the currently active window, regardless of which monitor it is on.
- Windows + PrtScn – Captures both monitors as a single image and automatically saves it to your Screenshots folder (Windows 10 and 11).
- Win + Shift + S – Opens the Snip & Sketch tool, which lets you choose a rectangular, freeform, window, or full-screen snip (the full-screen option captures all monitors).

Knowing these basics sets the stage for customising your screenshot workflow. But when you're working with **dual monitors**regularly, you'll want more control. Let's explore the best ways to capture what you see, one screen or both.

Method 1: Built-in Windows Tools for Dual Monitor Screenshots

The Classic Print Screen (PrtScn)

For a quick capture of both monitors, press **PrtScn**. Open an image editor (like Paint, Photoshop, or even Word) and paste (Ctrl + V). The resulting image will be the combined width of both monitors. This method is fine for saving a full record of your workspace, but the resulting image can be very wide, making it hard to share or view on smaller screens.

Using Snip & Sketch (Win + Shift + S)

Win + Shift + S and a small toolbar appears at the top of your screen. Options include:

- Rectangular snip – Drag to select any portion across one or both monitors.
- Freeform snip – Draw a custom shape.
- Window snip – Click on a specific open window to capture it.
- Fullscreen snip – Captures everything on all displays.

If you choose the rectangular snip, you can start your selection on the left monitor and drag across to the right monitor—perfect for capturing a specific area that spans both screens. The snip is copied to your clipboard and also opens in a small annotation window where you can draw, highlight, or crop.

Snipping Tool (Legacy)

Windows still includes the older **Snipping Tool**. It can capture a window, rectangular area, or full screen (all monitors). However, it lacks the *Delay* feature and is less intuitive than Snip & Sketch. For most users, Snip & Sketch is the better choice, but both are pre-installed.

Game Bar (Win + G)

If you want to capture a single window or a specific game running on one monitor, press **Win + G** to open the Xbox Game Bar. Click the camera icon (or use **Win + Alt + PrtScn**) to take a screenshot of the active window. This is great for capturing content that might otherwise be obscured by overlays.

Pro tip: On Windows 10 and 11, you can change the default behaviour of the Print Screen key. Go to *Settings > Ease of Access > Keyboard* and toggle on “Use the Print Screen key to open screen snipping.” This makes PrtScn open Snip & Sketch instead of the old full-screen capture.

Method 2: Capturing Only One Monitor in a Dual Setup

Often you want a screenshot of just one display—maybe you’re presenting a slide on the left monitor while your reference notes are on the right. Here are several ways to isolate a single monitor.

Keyboard Shortcuts That Target the Active Window

Alt + PrtScn captures only the currently active window. If that window is on the left monitor, the screenshot will show only that monitor’s content (assuming the window is maximised or fills the screen). If the window is smaller than the monitor, you’ll get just the window, not the entire monitor. This is useful for focused sharing.

Moving the Active Window

If you need a full screenshot of Monitor A, simply click on any window on that monitor to make it the active display, then press **Alt + PrtScn** while the window is maximised. This works but requires a bit of manual setup.

Using Snip & Sketch for a Single Monitor

Press **Win + Shift + S** and choose **Rectangular snip**. Drag a window that covers the entire monitor you want. If your monitors are side by side at the same resolution, you can estimate the dimensions. For precise capture, many users prefer third-party tools (see Method 3).

Built-in “Print Screen” With Monitor Targeting (Third-Party Drivers)

Some graphics card software (like NVIDIA GeForce Experience or AMD Adrenalin) allows you to assign hotkeys to capture a specific display. While not built into Windows, this option works if you already have that software installed.

Method 3: Third-Party Tools for Ultimate Control

If you regularly need **screenshots on dual monitors**, third-party tools offer far more flexibility, annotation, and

automated saving. Here are the best options.

Lightshot

Lightshot is lightweight and free. After installation, press the PrtScn key (or custom hotkey) and a crosshair appears. You can drag to select any area—even across monitors. It then opens an editor for annotation, and you can save, copy, or upload directly. Lightshot also lets you set a custom hotkey to capture the entire screen (both monitors) or the current monitor. This gives you the best of both worlds.

Greenshot

Greenshot is open-source and highly configurable. You can assign different actions to different hotkeys:

- Capture full screen (both monitors)
- Capture window
- Capture region (manual selection)
- Capture last region (repeat previous selection)

For dual monitors, Greenshot also offers a “Capture monitor” option, which lets you specify Monitor 1, Monitor 2, or all monitors. This is perfect when you need only the left or right screen. It also supports annotations, obfuscation, and exporting to multiple destinations (file, clipboard, printer, email).

ShareX

ShareX is a powerful, free, open-source tool with a steep learning curve but incredible functionality. You can set custom hotkeys for each monitor, automatically upload to cloud services, apply watermarks, and more. It can even capture scrolling windows, which is useful when you have a very tall document on one monitor. For dual-monitor users, ShareX allows you to define specific regions saved as presets, so you can quickly capture the left monitor every time.

Snagit (Paid)

Snagit by TechSmith is the gold standard for professional screenshots. It includes everything: screen recording, scrolling captures, advanced editing, and custom hotkeys per monitor. The “All-in-One” capture mode lets you choose between full screen, window, region, or a specific monitor. The built-in editor allows you to add arrows, text, and effects. If you take screenshots daily for work, Snagit is worth the investment.

Mac Users: Built-in and Third-Party Options

For those using dual monitors on macOS, the built-in shortcuts are simpler. Press **Shift + Command + 3** to capture all screens (each as a separate file). Press **Shift + Command + 4** to select a region; then press **Spacebar** to capture a specific window. Holding **Control** with these shortcuts copies to clipboard. Third-party tools like **CleanShot X** or **Monosnap** provide per-monitor hotkeys similar to those on Windows.

Editing and Annotating Dual Monitor Screenshots

Once you’ve captured your screenshot, you may need to edit it—especially if it spans two screens and you want to focus on one area. Here are quick editing tips:

- Crop – Use Paint, Photos, or built-in editors to remove the monitor you don’t need. This is helpful when you accidentally captured both screens.
- Resize – A dual-monitor screenshot can be extremely wide. Resize it (maintaining aspect ratio) before sharing in emails or documents.
- Annotate – Add arrows, boxes, or text to highlight specific parts. Snip & Sketch, Greenshot, Lightshot, and Snagit all have simple annotation tools.
- Blur sensitive information – If your second monitor shows personal data, use the blur/obfuscate tool in Greenshot or Snagit to hide it.

For batch editing, consider using a dedicated image editor like GIMP or Photoshop. But for quick tasks, built-in annotations are enough.

Best Practices for Organising and Sharing Dual Monitor Screenshots

When you capture multiple screenshots daily, organisation becomes key. Here are some tips:

- Set a default save location – In Snip & Sketch, you can choose to auto-save to the Screenshots folder. In third-party tools, configure a dedicated folder like “Dual Monitor Captures.”

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#print • #screen • #dual • #monitors

DIGITAL EDITION

print-screen-with-dual-monitors

DIGITAL EDITION

print-screen-with-dual-monitors

DIGITAL EDITION

print-screen-with-dual-monitors

DIGITAL EDITION

print-screen-with-dual-monitors