

# Delivering Fast & Efficient Dailies with Daylight

FilmLight



Thom Berryman, head of Pinewood Digital International, explains how the FilmLight dailies tool provides the grading foundation and practical deliverables for Pinewood Digital in the UK and North America



One of the key functions we provide as part of the Pinewood business is to handle the front end of the post-production process. As a specialist front-end dailies division, we manage dailies as a service for movie producers, from the big studios like Disney and Lucas to independent production houses.

Our business is to receive the media from set, ingest and archive to LTO and spinning disk storage, then grade and render it for editorial, as well as for the traditional dailies review screenings. We started out hand-crafting our own tools for this, because there simply was nothing on the market that offered the workflows we needed, at both the quality our clients demand and a cost-effective price point.

Naturally, we kept close to the industry, seeing where developments were going and nudging vendors where we could. And it became apparent to us that FilmLight, a company we already knew and respected, was looking to create a dailies tool.

Within the group we are big users of their Baselight grading system, and know the guys at FilmLight very well. We talked to them and it quickly became obvious that there was much more power and functionality in what they were planning than there was in our own system, let alone what else was out on the market. With the constant development and release of new cameras, we made a strategic decision to reduce our software development operations and focus more on our key service offerings. We even did a shoot-out with other solutions, but FilmLight won outright so we got ourselves onto the beta test programme.

We can even claim to have influenced the product's name. Originally FilmLight planned to call it Baselight Dailies, but a member of our team suggested compressing it to Daylight, which it is today.

On a more practical level, we brought our experience to the table to say that the dailies process is more than just the DIT moving data off camera cards on set. That is just one step in a continuous workflow from the set to the final grade. Rather than just a 'one person, one task' tool, Daylight has become part of a network and part of a content flow.

We worked with beta versions for a long while, then started buying systems as soon as they became available in mid 2015. We now have around 20 Daylight systems, spread across Pinewood and Shepperton in the UK and our US base in Atlanta.



Daylight

Recently the systems have been out on location as far afield as New Zealand, Hawaii, Italy, South Korea and South Africa, and our Daylight workflow has been utilised on some of the top movies in the last couple of years, including Lucasfilm's 'Rogue One', Marvel's 'Doctor Strange' and Universal's 'The Mummy'.

One of the benefits we see is that everything we need to deliver comes from Daylight, apart from the LTO back-ups (which are still run using software we build in house). We ingest the camera media, and at that point we can add as much metadata as we need. That is a real strong point in the system.

The way it is designed makes it easy to get stuff done fast. We can put things like shot logging and framing information into a database that looks like Excel. But at the same time the colour tracking tool allows us to attach colour references from set, or pre-defined looks from the colourist.

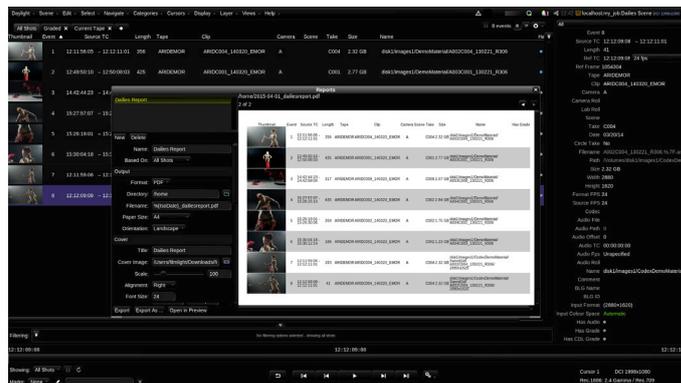
Daylight then lets us export in a variety of formats, along with standardised decision lists.

We also use Daylight to process pulls for VFX and drama scan deliveries in any required format including EXR and DPX files, by conforming against EDLs provided to us by editorial through our online VFX pull system, 'Lolly'.

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Another interesting benefit we have found is that we can even use it when the director has decided to shoot from 35 and 65mm film - yes, there is a surprising amount of that still around. We use Daylight as the control device at the negative scan. FilmLight's very long heritage in film and scanning means that the software can readily accommodate that, and that means we can provide a simple and seamless workflow no matter what sort of camera the production chooses.

I mentioned the ability to network Daylight, and ultimately you can carry that all the way to final delivery, with decisions made at every stage of the process being retained in metadata and creating a cumulative, collaborative workflow. In Atlanta our colourists use Baselight for grading so the whole thing is seamless. But where colourists prefer different grading software, there is a simple process of exporting CDL information in a standard open format between all common grading systems.



Daylight reports

The really big thing that Daylight gives us in the end is speed, and the ability to scale systems as we need, because you can add workstations to a network simply. If we need to ramp up quickly we can just pull systems from our various locations to deliver extra render power.

This distributed rendering architecture adds to the speed and simplicity. Most other systems can only render locally, which inevitably means queuing and delays. With Daylight you can set everything off in one go, rendering simultaneously across multiple processors. That also makes Daylight a really good multi-tasking tool. The operator can organise and distribute the work as best suits the project, rather than having to wait for renders at each stage.

All in all, Daylight enables us to develop customised, efficient and cost-effective workflows to suit our clients, whether they are making commercials, television episodics or major movies.

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