



Myths and Legends about Cine transfers.....

If you are researching the best way to have your cine film transferred you will find an abundance of people trying to get your business and a wealth of information on the methods they use to transfer your precious memories.

Companies offering transfer services range from one man in his bedroom (who thinks he can make a few pounds), to established companies like ourselves. We have over 25 years experience in this highly specialised field. Websites can be misleading; a one man business can make himself look like a multi national organisation. Our dealers will tell you that we have been in business for many many years and that we continue to offer them a consistently good service coupled with a competitive pricing structure.

Transfer Methods

It can be very confusing when you ask how your cine film will be transferred.

The most basic method used is where old projectors display your film onto a screen, a camera is then mounted beside the projector to capture the resulting images. This sounds perfectly sensible, however, the quality of the result will be affected by many factors.

Firstly the quality of the projector used: Most projectors are bought second-hand and used until they fail.

Secondly and most important, is the question of synchronisation. The PAL TV system we use in this country operates at a refresh rate of 50HZ.. Put simply, the camera produces 50 images per second. It is important the frames per second at which the film is projected is matched to the 50Hz exactly. This requires a speed of either 16 2/3 second or 25fps. Most projectors run at either 18fps or 24fprs. This inconsistency introduces a flicker to the transfer which is emphasised by the projectors 3 or 4 bladed shutter. This method also requires the transfer to be carried out in a totally light free environment which rarely happens.

At the other end of the Transfer scale is the "**Flying Spot**" system. This method is used to copy Hollywood Block Busters on to video. In fact this method is not so widespread nowadays as few films are still shot on film. In this method each frame is scanned individually and then digitally combined.. There are only one or two specialist companies using this system. However, it is very expensive and the increase in quality is not always noticeable. Remember the process was designed for much larger film gauges.

Sitting in the middle of the scale are Telecine Machines. This is what we use to transfer your films. These are specialised machines that were made by The Elmo Company of Japan. These machines were designed specifically for the process, have a variable speed control and five bladed shutter to avoid any flicker. The camera unit is built in to the projector and the image is kept within a sealed area and, therefore, not affected by any outside light sources. We own 15 machines, a supply of spare parts and regularly have specific spare parts re-engineered. Our own technician maintains the machines. We are also undergoing an upgrade program to bring the camera units within the machine up to the most modern standards possible.

Who will handle my film?

Some would say that the most important factor when choosing who to trust your films to are the people. Transferring cine film requires a blend of technical skills, artistry and understanding of the customers needs. Don't be fooled by the statistics some people quote. For example.. Some newer companies will tell you they have transferred half a million feet of film. In reality this equates to around 650 hrs of film. We have 3 Transfer Technicians working each day and they transfer this much film, and more, every month. The facts about our staff are that we have 5 experienced Transfer Technicians with over 25 years of experience within our company.

Cleaning your film.

Most cine film is in surprisingly good condition and only needs dusting with compressed air during the transfer. Other cleaning methods can actually do more harm than good. Several companies offer a cleaning service which involves wiping with swabs soaked in isopropyl alcohol. This will lift the dirt but will also dry the film making it more brittle and if the dirt builds up on the swab it will scratch the film.

What do I do with my film after it's been transferred?

We strongly recommend that you keep your film after the transfer. Box it up and pop it back under the stairs or in the loft. Your DVD or VHS tape could get lost or damaged.