

Film-Tech

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Industry moves towards eliminating silver-based soundtracks

Growing commitment to high-magenta tracks paves way for conversion to cost-efficient dye tracks

San Francisco, June 7, 1999—Taking a big step closer to the ultimate elimination of the costly silver-applied soundtrack process, the film industry is producing more and more release prints with high-magenta analog soundtracks.

The widespread use of high-magenta soundtracks, which are silver-based but use different dye layers, is a vital intermediate step towards the use of an economically and environmentally advantageous pure dye track.

Fully compatible with older, exciter-lamp soundheads, high-magenta tracks sound even better with the newer red LED readers that have been installed already on 36,000 projectors worldwide. This improved performance is expected to encourage the conversion of more installations to LED readers, which are required to read the pure cyan dye tracks that are the industry's ultimate goal.

Warner Bros. pioneers changeover to high-magenta

Warner Bros., printing at Technicolor, pioneered high-magenta soundtracks with 150 prints of *City of Angels* in April 1998, then on all 3,000 prints of *You've Got Mail* later in the year. Positive results fueled their decision to provide high-magenta soundtracks on all prints of all releases, beginning with *Message in a Bottle* in February of this year.

Artisan Entertainment has announced that all their releases will feature high-magenta tracks, starting with *The Limey*, the new film from Steven Soderbergh. Answer prints of *The Limey* were made at CFI, and production prints by Deluxe, which now prints high-magenta tracks upon customer request. In addition, Fotokem Laboratories have stated that all their future printing will include high-magenta analog soundtracks.

"High-magenta soundtracks are bringing us closer to the day when we can convert to cyan dye tracks and eliminate the outdated silver-applied soundtrack altogether," said Ioan Allen, Vice President, Dolby Laboratories.

Development of the new soundtrack technologies was spearheaded by a collaborative effort of Dolby Laboratories, Kodak, and Technicolor, who were then joined by Deluxe, CFI, Fotokem, and stock manufacturers Fuji and Agfa. Because digital soundtracks are not redeveloped, they are unaffected by these changes in analog soundtrack processes.

Dolby Laboratories is the world leader in both analog and digital film sound. The privately held company is based in San Francisco, with film division offices in New York and Los Angeles and European headquarters in England.

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