Colourist

AI overview

Artificial intelligence (AI) is transforming the role of the colourist in the film and TV industry by streamlining many tasks, such as colour grading and scene analysis. AI-powered tools have the potential to automate repetitive tasks, saving time and allowing for quicker iterations in post-production. While these tools enhance efficiency, they don't replace the colourist, but rather allow them to focus more on creative decisions.

Additionally, AI could offer new artistic options, such as suggesting colour palettes and simulating complex lighting conditions. To stay competitive, colourists could explore AI advancements and consider integrating real-time rendering, cloud-based workflows, and virtual production into their work. Developing custom AI tools tailored to personal styles could provide a unique advantage.

What AI tools can I use right now? – Efficiency & workflow opportunities

Planning and onset

Planning and onset: Virtual production workflows require more creative decisions before shooting. Auto-matching tools help quickly create 'show look' LUTs for on-set use.

Post-production workflows: AI tools automate LUT generation, grade matching, skin tone recovery, and visual consistency, freeing up time for creative decisions.

Automatic data logging: AI tools can log and label previous projects, creating a reference "toolbox" for future use.

Generative AI plugins: New generative AI plugins are emerging, offering improvements like noise removal, banding reduction, and clipping reduction.

Post-production workflows

Confidential and customisable AI models: Self-hosted AI models allow colourists to work privately and create tools tailored to their personal style.

Local AI development: Colourists can develop their own AI models on personal computers, offering unique and customisable assistance.

Training and learning: Setting up and training custom AI models requires learning, but the benefits to workflow and creative output are significant.

Confidential and custom AI models

AI-assisted colour grading: AI tools can automate colour balancing and suggest adjustments based on the content of each scene, enhancing the grading process.

Real-time rendering: Real-time rendering enables colourists to see immediate results of their decisions, removing long render times.

Cloud-based collaboration: Cloud tools enable remote collaboration with directors, editors, and VFX teams in real-time, increasing flexibility in workflows.

High-resolution workflows: As demand grows for HDR, 8K, and 4K content, specialised workflows are required, along with the knowledge to manage these high-quality formats.

How can I prepare for the future?

As technologies develop, keeping up to date with the latest opportunities can be really beneficial.

These are some areas that colourists may need to understand in the future.

Future Tech	Description	Resources for learning
AI-assisted colour grading	AI tools that help automate colour balancing and grading, suggesting adjustments based on scene content.	Check out ScreenSkills Training, events and opportunities page for up to date courses; DaVinci Resolve and Baselight provide tutorials on their AI features.
Real-time rendering	Technology that enables colourists to see immediate results of their grading decisions without waiting for long render times.	ScreenSkills provides courses on virtual production and bursary's to attend manufacturer courses. Platforms like Unreal Engine offer free courses on real-time rendering workflows.
Cloud-based collaboration	Allows colourists to work remotely, sharing projects in real-time with directors, editors, and VFX teams.	Check out ScreenSkills Training, events and opportunities page for up to date courses on HoD management, and software providers like Frame.io and Adobe provide tutorials on their platforms.
HDR, 8K & 4K workflows	The growing demand for higher resolution and dynamic range requires specialised workflows and knowledge.	Software tutorials from DaVinci Resolve and Baselight. Online courses from SMPTE.
Virtual production integration	Colourists now collaborate with virtual production teams to ensure the correct grading of digitally created environments and characters.	Check out ScreenSkills Training, events and opportunities page for up to date courses on virtual production; resources from Unreal Engine and industry events like BSC Expo provide further training.
Digital onset infrastructure	New systems such as SMPTE ST2110 are changing the way we distribute video data onset.	SMPTE offers various online and in person training