

## Image Trends unveils film cleaning technology

Austin company hopes to sell scanner to big studios.

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An Austin-based company has developed a way to make movies look better.

Image Trends announced Monday that it has developed a high-resolution film scanner that cleans motion picture film before it is edited.

Cleaning films is a crucial part of the production process, Image Trends CEO Dan Sullivan said. Defects such as dust and scratches need to be taken out of the film before the editing process can begin.

"A typical frame will have a couple hundred defects," Sullivan said.

The current technology, Sullivan said, is done frame-by-frame and has half the resolution of Image Trends' technology.

Image Trends' scanner allows for a deeper look at the film, company spokesman Michael Conley said.

"We're faster," Sullivan said. "We do defect resolution immediately and cheaper."

The scanner sells for \$200,00, which includes the cost of software.

Sullivan said any of the major motion picture studios could be clients. Austin's fledgling film industry is still too small to include much post-production work, he said. Image Trends is one of the only firms in Texas that offers these services.

The scanner is part of Image Trends' efforts to develop a new revenue stream.

The company has offered two other products: software for professional photographers that lets them automate part of the editing process, and contract engineering work for clients such as Nikon and Epson, Sullivan said.

Founded in 2006, Image Trends had \$1.5 million in revenue last year and received a \$1 million grant in May from Texas Emerging Technology Fund, a \$200 million initiative created in 2005 at the governor's request.

One challenge for Image Trends is the increasing popularity of filming digitally instead of with 35 mm film. Movie theaters have started to use digital projectors instead of film projectors, and some effects-laden movies have been shot digitally.

Steve Mims, a filmmaker and lecturer at the University of Texas, said there's still a big market for film cleaning but he noted that digital movie-making is likely to increase in popularity.

"The idea of having a film image that you need to clean before you make it into a movie is still a legitimate concern right now because there are still lots of movies shot on film," he said.

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Image Trends' ScanMaster 4000 features automatic defect detection and correction technology. The scanner was a collaborative effort with local companies; Image Trends also got support from the Texas Emerging Technology Fund.