

Scott Cinemas
Playback Source Specifications

Preferred Source: Cinema-ready DCP

A DCP (“Digital Cinema Print”) is an a/v package comprised of high-definition mJPEG2000 video and (up to) 8 channel audio, wrapped inside the MXF file format. The DCP is usually provided on a hard drive but can also be sent electronically via internet or satellite means.

DCP’s are created using the Clients source audio and video files by a mastering house.

Well-known mastering houses are

- Deluxe (<https://www.bydeluxe.com/en/distribution/products/digital-cinema/>)
- Motion Picture Solutions (<https://www.motionpicturesolutions.com/>)
- DCM (<https://www.dcm.co.uk/production-and-services>)

If you are short on budget, you can try various home solutions to convert your source files to DCP – a degree of technical know-how and a relatively fast PC is required to run these solutions:

- DCP-o-matic (<https://dcpomatic.com/>)
- OpenDCP (<https://www.opendcp.org/>)

Providing a cinema-ready DCP ensures the absolute best quality of presentation, though do be aware that the playback will only be as good as the quality of your original source file.

Other Options

Blu-Ray Disc

BD is a high definition consumer video format. It has more or less the same resolution as 2k cinema, but doesn’t have quite as good of a colour depth, which can lead to some minor colour inaccuracies when projected on a Digital Cinema projector – these would generally not be obvious unless you are a professional looking for them.

We have BD playback facilities in all cinemas. Sound is reproduced as Dolby Digital 5.1/7.1 or linear PCM 5.1/7.1 – our systems are not able to support DTS-MA or Dolby TrueHD.

Blu Rays discs must be Region B or Region Free.

DVD

DVD is the lowest quality of consumer video sources that we can play back. DVD’s have only half the resolution of BD and Digital Cinema (540 pixels high as opposed to 1080) and therefore don’t look that great on a Digital Cinema projector – remember, Digital Cinema projectors are designed primarily to play back at high definition and therefore don’t include the best scalers, as you may find in a home TV.

If providing a DVD, audio playback will be Dolby Digital 5.1 if the disc is encoded in this manner. If encoded solely in stereo, we use a Dolby Pro Logic II matrix decoder to extrapolate a pseudo-surround sound effect.

Supplied DVDs must be 16:9 ANAMORPHIC, Region 2 or 0, PAL or NTSC. The audio must be encoded as Dolby Digital or 2-channel PCM stereo. ANY DVD’S NOT PROVIDED IN THE 16:9 ANAMORPHIC FORMAT WILL NOT DISPLAY CORRECTLY.

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Laptop – PC

We can connect any laptop with an HDMI connector to the projectors, and you should ensure your machine can output at 1920x1080 resolution. Sound is carried separately – if you have a digital optical connector on your laptop we are able to decode in Dolby Digital or PCM; however if you only have an analogue 3.5mm output, this carries only stereo sound and we use a Dolby Pro Logic II matrix decoder to extrapolate a pseudo-surround sound effect.

Laptop – Macbook

This works in much the same way as PC based laptop, however with older Macbooks, you must provide the appropriate video cable. This is usually Thunderbolt or MiniDP to DVI – you should ensure you know which cable you need, and also note that sound is carried separately in the same way as a PC.

Files Only

If you have source files but no means to play it back, most cinemas have laptops that they can use to do this. You should ensure your source file is in the highest resolution possible, with a multichannel soundtrack. We find that MPEG4 using the h.264 and h.265 codecs provides the best results for video.

You are welcome to send the files to us via WeTransfer to test prior to your hire.

Broadcast/Professional and Other Formats

We don't hold playback devices for older formats, or those used in the Broadcast profession. Whilst we're happy to screen your material, you will need to provide the source player. Source player must have one of the following outputs: HDMI, HD-SDI (Dual Link preferred), Y Pb Pr Component, DVI-D, VGA or Composite Video. Audio can be 2-channel via RCA connectors or Dolby Digital via Optical or Coaxial. HD sources with HD-SDI or DVI output at 2k or 4k can be connected to the Digital Cinema projector – 4k material will be downscaled to 2k everywhere except Sidmouth.

You must let us know in advance if your broadcast source player outputs Dolby E audio – we can decode this format but only have a couple of units to serve all cinemas and will therefore need some notice. We can decode Dolby E at 23.98, 24, 25, 29.97 or 30 fps.

Games Consoles

We're able to support any games console with an HDMI connector and separate audio output. All consoles are provided by the client.

Android TV, Apple TV and Streaming Set Top Boxes

We do not permit the use of streaming or 'set top' boxes in any of our venues.

Streaming Services

Please note that Netflix, Apple TV, Amazon Prime, Disney Plus and most other streaming services are not licensed for playback within cinemas. You are welcome to attempt to obtain copyright and permission yourself to do this, but we cannot aid you, and must have written confirmation of permission.

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Satellite

We have a satellite feed from IntelSat 10.02 (1 degree west) in all venues, excluding Newton Abbot. We can receive free to air channels and can manually tune to your specified frequencies. If you are broadcasting via IS 10.02, we can pick this up, and decode the multichannel audio. You must use DVB-S or S2 encryption.

35mm

Some cinemas have 35mm capabilities. Where these are installed, we can play pretty much every 35mm film format. We use tower and platter systems so can play acetate and polyester print stock (but not nitrate – sorry!). We have flat and anamorphic scope lenses and picture sizes are the same as those used for Digital Cinema.

Barnstaple and East Grinstead can play 35mm prints with Dolby A-type, Dolby SR or Dolby Digital soundtracks. Sidmouth can only play back in Dolby SR. Bristol can play back Dolby A-type, Dolby SR, Dolby Digital and DTS Digital.

35mm film prints must be delivered to us on separate 20-minute reels – please don't assume you can deliver the print ready made up, as we might not have the same long play systems as you have used elsewhere. We have competent technicians trained on 35mm and we'll make up your print using only the best techniques.

We may opt to apply the FilmGuard cleaning solution to your print... please tell us if you would rather we didn't.

Quick Note on Sound Formats

For Dolby Digital and Dolby E, connection must be made via optical or coaxial cable to the cinema sound processor. If the source lacks an optical or coaxial connector, Dolby Pro Logic II over analogue audio is the only other solution.

Dolby Digital sound outputs must conform to the Dolby AC3 codec.

We are unable to support DTS or DTS-MA audio, Dolby TrueHD or (at present) Dolby Atmos.

PLEASE REMEMBER: Across all formats, the output on screen is only as good as the source content. Digital Cinema projectors are highly tuned towards expecting high definition sources, and will show up imperfections in badly mastered or badly created source material.

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Microphones and Live Sound

We always have handheld wireless radio mics available. We have dual-mic kits and quad-mic kits. These are accompanied by desktop stands or floor stands.

If you wish to make use of microphones, cinema staff will help set these up and set the levels correctly.

We have a range of 4 and 8 channel audio mixers, into which you can connect many sources such as vocals, effects and instruments. 6.3mm and RCA inputs are available, as well as a limited number of XLR channels.

Please note that all sound is connected to the cinemas main speaker system, specifically the left and right stage channels for sources connected to the mixers. Whilst the speakers are high dynamic range units with impressive power handling, please check with cinema staff to set up levels to ensure our speakers are not damaged.

Lighting

Most cinemas have a range of spotlights that can be reconfigured as needed to provide atmospheric lighting. This can be discussed with the cinema technician.

We have a very small number of portable PAR cans connected to portable Strand dimmers to provide foot lighting. Please ask to make use of this facility.

Effects

The use of practical effects, such as smoke machines, is permitted, however must be discussed in detail with cinema staff. For example, the use of smoke machines generally involves disconnecting fire sensors and thus appropriate risk assessments need to be put into place with the Client.

Laser light sources that you may choose to supply can only be operated in compliance with regulations and must not be pointed at the audience.

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Restrictions

We do not allow any third party (organisations or individuals) to operate our Digital Projectors or place content on our servers. All operation of projectors and DCP content handling shall be done internally, by Scott Cinemas technicians. Clients can work with the cinema Technician to set up their own source players where required.

We have free wi-fi available in all cinemas, however, Clients are not permitted to connect to our wired networks without express permission of the Technical Manager.

Sidmouth – no unauthorised personnel are permitted to enter the projection box at any time due to the use of high-powered laser projection equipment, that can be unsafe around untrained persons.

Where Clients are operating source players from a projection box, please listen to cinema staff instructions. Do not look into the projection beam, or place hands in front of the beam. Do not obstruct the extract fan grills.

We do not permit any third party to change any sound settings in the cinema sound processors, crossover units or amplifiers. Volume control shall be set by use of the main Fader only. If fine tuning is required, this can be done by a Scott Cinemas technician. All of our auditoria are fully calibrated and equalised to Dolby reference level.

We do not permit satellite dish positions to be adjusted at any time.