

InFocus Screenplay 4800

Great value for a big picture

By Tony Davey

Infocus Screenplay 4800 DLP projector. \$3999

Infocus are a leading player in business projectors and are now entering the home theatre projection market. The Screenplay 4800 is the entry level of projectors specifically targeted at the home theatre market.

A native SVGA 4:3 projector, the 4800 boasts 800 x 600 pixels, 1100 ansi lumens and a 2000:1 contrast ratio. The 4800 is compatible with all current video formats, including both PAL and NTSC progressive images and (not likely to be available in NZ) HDTV.

The 4800 is based on the familiar X1 model – they even look the same. The 4800 includes different software, which controls how the video input maps to the DLP colour wheel. This is optimised – particularly on the component video input – for video on the 4800, while the X1 is optimised for business presentations. The remote is different (again, video oriented rather than Powerpoint) and there's more video cables in the box.

Set Up

Hook up is a breeze for either S-Video or composite video connections.

A VGA connection is used for both standard VGA signal from a computer or, via a supplied RCA to VGA adapter, a component video signal for the highest quality video. There's also an audio plug (although why you would want to utilise

the onboard speaker doesn't even bear thinking about).

Once the projector is fired up, set up is relatively simple and the manual pretty much stayed in the box. There is a manual focus and zoom at the front of the projection lens. With the projector far enough away from the screen to get the size image you want (I had it

approximately 3.5m away to get a 2.3m picture) simply focus the image and then forget about it.

Performance

Digital projectors, including DLP, historically have had a couple of caveats to trade off against the generally good picture and ease of use. These are things such as fan noise, screen door and no "true black". The Screenplay 4800 addresses some of these caveats and kicks them to touch.

Screen door is a non issue (unless you want to watch the image from less than a few feet from the picture), even with scenes normally prone to pixelation (large scenes of single colours such as blue sky, or white snow) there wasn't a hint of it.

Digital projectors can not produce a true black. Dark scenes weren't "black", but they were pretty damn close. It certainly has a far more dynamic picture than my own LCD Philips Garbo projector and much better "blacks". There was no haziness to night scenes, simply a solid near black image that was still capable of displaying plenty of detail.

Fan noise is the only real weakness of this projector at a spec sheet rated 37db. I found the noise level too high. When listening to a movie at night-time levels (low enough not to wake the Mrs) there were passages that could not be heard over the fan. The other issue with the fan was that it doesn't turn off when the projector is in standby mode, there is constantly noise (albeit very quiet noise) coming from the projector.

Lord of the Rings is possibly one of the most difficult movies for projectors to handle. There is a fantastic mix of dark and bright scenes and colours go anywhere from deliberately dull (caves of Moria and Mordor) to very vibrant (The Shire).

The 4800 handled the entire movie with ease. Image quality from the 4800 was first class, from the opening scenes and the battle with Lord Sauron, the



picture literally leapt off my screen, there was a depth to the image I'm not ordinarily used to. Skin tones were well handled and avoided the sometimes sunburned look of other projectors.

The Shire, where Frodo first meets up with Gandalf is full of rich greens from the surrounding forest and the picture oozes detail, from the leaves of the trees to the wrinkles on Gandalf's face, everything was captured beautifully on screen and the fireworks from Bilbo's party have a real dazzling sparkle to them.

Summary

The image produced is vibrant, colour fidelity is astounding, dark scenes are portrayed very well and there is no hint of screen door.

At less than \$4,000, this projector offers performance and features beyond its pricetag and certainly exceeds other comparably priced projectors.

If you are fortunate enough not to see the DLP "rainbows" (see our Buying a Projector article) and want a true home theatre experience, forget a 36inch widescreen TV, forget even a 42inch Plasma screen, nothing beats a 100 inch well projected image. The 4800 is cheaper than either of these alternatives, so take some time out to give one of these a test drive.

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