

# Cool Lights

How much does technology help us? Can we have more of an impact? Accomplish our goals with greater ease?

In the field of image production, this person believes yes. Not only does technology improve our capabilities, it allows us to keep our focus on what is most important, creativity and quality.



This week was my first shoot with and all battery powered setup. Most of the production day my entire lighting setup consisted of LED video lights made by a company called Cool Lights which emphasizes lower temperature (heat) output lighting instruments. I started this article by speaking about technology because a short time ago this setup did not exist, at any price point.

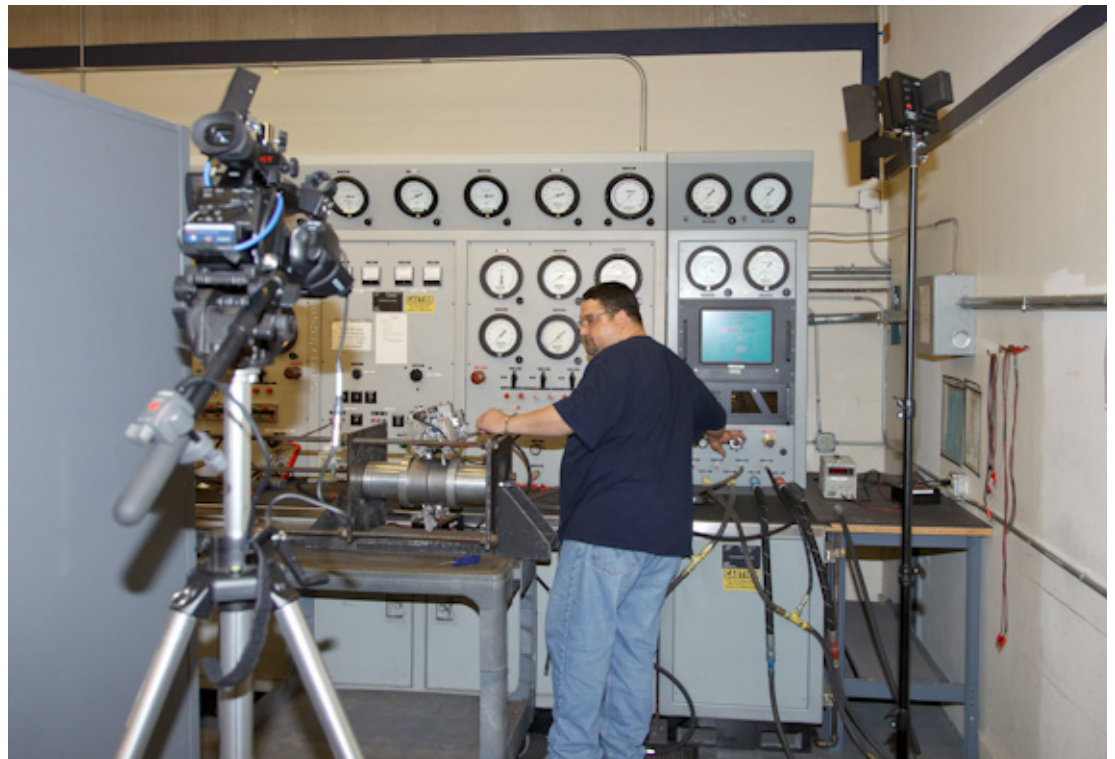
For this shoot I needed to capture scenes from around an industrial plant from many different angles and areas. With my Tungsten light kit this would mean lots of long extension chords, power checks and lawsuit prone trip hazards. Not with this setup. The LED lights are something special as they draw a relatively low amount of power which allows them to be run off of normal sized batteries. For most of the day we shot with two 256w small LEDs and one 600w larger LED. This gave a larger key source with a couple accent lights.





The portability can not be understated. Upon moving to a different location in the plant, I would setup the camera in the position I wanted to shoot from and then place the light stands wherever we needed light. As simple as think and place. What a joy not to have to wrangle dirty chords all day long across a factory floor.

The LED lights have a nice feature of being able to turn off rows or banks of light. This gives you a way to decrease the light output without needing to move the instrument. Another improvement in lighting technology.



After the factory floor shoot we moved into a conference room to shoot some talking head shots and a Cool Lights fluorescent fixture was added as the soft key source.



The best part of these new wave of lights in this scenario is the temperature,... of the room. These lights put out a fraction of the heat tungsten based instruments emit. Many times the on-camera talent starts to melt with a room full of tungsten lights as often the A/C needs to be turned off to eliminate the hum being picked up by the condenser mic. The LED and fluorescent fixtures keep the temperature in the room unchanged which is very important for a longer shoot.

As you can tell by now, I am a convert to these new lighting instruments. One other nice feature of the LED and fluorescent instruments is that they come in a daylight balanced color temperature. In the past, this was only possible through the use of HMI lighting which is expensive and outputs way too much light for indoor use. 5600k seems to be a little more video-camera friendly with regards to color as the lack of red seems to work well with video processing.



The benefit of investing in 5600k instruments is if one needs to shoot outdoors, the lights do not need to be gelled. This keeps the power at maximum as one often needs all the output one can get when shooting outdoors. The 600w LED is just enough to have an impact for an outdoor talking head shot. Once again, an unprecedented level of portability.

I will end this article where I started, amazed at technology. This is why so many wait with anticipation for new models of cameras, lenses and support gear, it just plain helps us produce better images at often more affordable price points.

Happy shooting!