

Lighting Software

By NookSchoenfeld

This month, *PLSN* combed the internet to see just how many different lighting software programs there are out there. We were pleased to find so much more than just a few CAD programs, often mixed with previsualization packages for drawing light plots. We found software that takes care of your paperwork for you. We found programs designed to show you the best choices for architectural installs through photorealistic renderings. There is software available for designing proper roadway and tunnel lighting. Heck, we found a program that lets LDs design their own fixture, complete with body shape, reflector, lens, ray tracing, type of bulb and socket.

Many of these programs come as stand-alone applications. Some are part of larger bundles where users can choose what is best for them. Some are free. Some are installed on the lighting consoles you may be using. Most have an initial purchase cost, followed by various subscription rates. Almost all provide limited trial versions or student discounts.

Acuity Brands Visual Lighting 2017



Platform: Windows 2008+
Combining lighting and energy calculation tools with powerful 3D modeling software, Visual simplifies design and provides comprehensive intelligence and analysis for advanced lighting projects, such as installations. Tools are available to calculate how many fixtures a designer needs to illuminate a space based on their criteria. Good for interiors, parking lot and ballfield lighting.

acuitybrands.com

AutoDesk AutoStage



Platforms: Mac or Windows based
The makers of AutoCAD have a 2D or 3D plug in or complete simpler complete CAD program you can choose between for drawing plots. An efficient tool for the cost-effective and easy creation of professional CAD plans, engineering designs and visual image, for fairs, exhibitions, theatre and live entertainment.

autostage.de

Capture



Platforms: Mac or Windows-based
Design 2D plots, make 3D renders and previsualize your show with this software. Can stream video in the program as well as make videos of your cues in action. Can take on laser feeds and water jet effects. Previz programs cover from one to unlimited universe of DMX.

capturesweden.com

Cast WYSIWYG R41



Platforms: PC based; can run on Macs running Boot camp or Parallel, but not recommended for speed.
WYSIWYG is the original previsualization program and is still very popular. One can utilize the Design section to draw and label plots and assemble stage diagrams. The Report section deals with all paperwork generated. Performance enables a lighting console to connect to a visualize to write cues.

cast-soft.com

ChamSys MagicVis



Platform: PC Based
Free software available for use with ChamSys consoles. Build your 3D environment in the patch. Build plots in the console where the show is created. Not in some 3rd party software. Can run on an external PC networked to the console. Simple, yet great previz program. Data transfers automatically. Also creates plots and paperwork.

chamsys.co.uk

Chromateq Studio DMX



Platforms: Windows, Mac and Linux
Simulation program that allows the user to quickly assemble truss and lights in basic 3D plots, while adding beam, wash, gobo and laser effects. Can import CAD object files. Users able to make multi camera movies of a presentation.

chromateq.com

Claude Heintz Design/The LX Series



Platforms: Mac OSX; Python (open-source for LXConsole).
LXBeams and its sibling, LXFree, allow both drawing a plot and manipulating data related to the objects in the drawing. LXBeams also allows the display of the beams and includes a window that uses OpenGL to produce a rendering of their effect. LXConsole is a full featured live controller that can handle automated and LED fixtures. It outputs DMX through Art-Net, sACN and USB.

lx.claudeheintzdesign.com

DIALux



Platforms: Windows 7+
With this free software, you can design, calculate and visualize architectural light professionally — single rooms, whole floors, buildings and outdoor scenes. You can plan and design using the electronic luminaire catalogs of the world's leading luminaire manufacturers. Superimpose on the CAD data of other architectural programs and create your own lighting design.

dial.de

Enviro-Systems LightCalc



Platforms: Windows 95+
Program for interior designers and architects. Helps determine which light source to use. Determines the overall reflectance in the room and finds the proper footcandle level for general, task, and art lighting. Determines the proper spacing needed using both Inverse Square Law and Lumen methods. Suggests a grid layout for general lighting. Art lighting lets you view lights right on the artwork.

lightcalc.com

Focus Track



Platforms: Mac OSX or Windows
Focus Track makes documenting everything easy. From your console show file, it figures out which lights are used when, in which positions, colors or gobos. It gives you an accurate cue list printout from the console with space to add detailed notes and cue photos. Includes the patch. It can also work out how much power your show really utilizes. Great for transferring show info between consoles such as the ETC EOS and grandMA lines.

focustrack.co.uk

Glamox OptiWin 3D Pro



Platforms: Windows and Mac
OptiWin 3D Pro is Glamox' own free lighting calculation program for architectural lights. The program carries out lighting calculations for comprehensive and complex projects through thousands of fixtures. It can figure out energy usage and lux levels. It is also possible to import 3D models into .DWG or .DGN formats. Includes LENI Indicator calculations for the new Energy Directive.

glamox.com

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Lambda Research TracePro

Platform: Windows based
Good for designing new architectural, automotive and tool lights. Ray tracing software with an intuitive, easy-to-use interface much like a CAD program. Based on a solid modeling engine, the software's precise CAD import/export and lens import save hours of work building accurate models for simulation of real-world parts. Features photorealistic renderings in TracePro Data Sheets.

lambdares.com/tracepro

Light Converse

Platform: Windows based
The previz product delivers a dynamic array of capabilities in a virtual 3D show platform, offering software and hardware solutions for visualizing and integrating Multiple Show Disciplines — including Lighting, Video, 3D Mapping, Laser, Water Effects, Pyrotechnics, Moving Objects and Object Tracking by automated fixtures and projectors — all within in a Photo-Realistic, Real-Time, 3D View. Supports plug ins for Vectorworks, AutoCAD, 3DSMax and Maya.

lightconverse.com

Lighting Analysts AGI32

Platform: Windows based
AGI32 is a calculation tool for accurate photometric predictions: A technical tool that can compute illuminance in any situation, assist in luminaire placement and aiming, and validate adherence to any number of lighting criterion. The program can create a virtual model of a proposed architectural design. It can reveal characteristics and effects that would be hard to detect in anything short of the completed installation.

lightinganalysts.com

Lighting Reality Pro

Platform: Windows based
Software specifically designed for illuminating outdoor areas. It enables lighting designers to quickly produce standards-compliant street and outdoor area lighting plans in real-time. The application comes ready-loaded with photometric data from a wide variety of top international lighting manufacturers, and supports all the key road lighting standards.

lightingreality.com

Lightwright

Platforms: Mac and Windows based
Manages theatrical lighting paperwork data and can connect with Vectorworks Spotlight and ETC's Eos family of consoles. It designs and prints labels, makes fixture counts, finds common mistakes, including overlapping patches, overloaded dimmers, non-existent dimmer numbers, and mis-numbered positions -reconciling changes. It counts individual cuts of color as well as gobos, and the printouts can include color swatches and pictures of each gobo.

mckernon.com

MA Lighting MA 3D

Platform: Windows based
This visualizer program is extremely powerful and can design three-dimensional stage layouts. In conjunction with any grandMA2 console or the grandMA2 onPC program. Allows a straight forward design and set up of any custom stage or scenery layout with its 2D drawing facilities and a library of basic graphical elements. Multiple windows in 2D and 3D views with many camera views can be open at the same time, updating looks in real-time.

malighting.com

OxyTech LiteStar 4D

Platform: Windows 7+
Software for lighting design that allows the design of interior and exterior areas (generic areas, sports areas, roads, tunnels) and the management of photometric and commercial data. Can interface with 2D and 3D CAD files and do lighting calculations and renderings. Suite of programs contains six different applications.

oxytech.it

Relux ReluxNet

Platform: Windows based
A handy search engine to find product data on luminaires and sensors for architectural lighting fixtures to suit your needs. Search for fixtures by mounting type, shape, lamp type, control option or socket size. One can compare different manufactures similar types. Can export product data in the file formats: rlx (Relux), rfa (Revit), dwg (AutoCAD), ldt (Eulum) and ies (IES). Photometric light plots can be generated using ReluxCAD for Revit.

relux.com

Trimble SketchUp

Platforms: Mac and Windows based
SketchUp is synonymous with easy 3D modeling software. Start by drawing lines and shapes. Push and pull surfaces to turn them into 3D forms. Stretch, copy, rotate and paint to make anything you like. Great program for showing simple design ideas in an illustrated copy. Thousands of free 3D symbols available. Exports pdf's, images and CAD files.

sketchup.com

Martin Show Designer MSD 6

Platform: Windows based
Previsualization Software program. MSD 6 is available in two versions. The Pro version has any feature needed to pre-visualize lighting and video in 3D, integrate moving scenery, create video animation and paper presentation. The Lite version offers the essential features to do 3D pre-visualization. Software comes with Martin controllers, but can receive the DMX values from other consoles as well through Art-Net protocol or DMX.

martinshowdesigner.com

Radiance

Platform: UNIX
Radiance is a suite of programs for the analysis and visualization of lighting. Input files specify the scene geometry, materials, luminaires, time, date and sky conditions (for daylight calculations). Calculated values include spectral radiance (luminance + color), irradiance (illuminance + color) and glare indices. Simulation results are displayed as color images, numerical values and contour plots.

radsite.lbl.gov/radiance

Stage Research SoftPlot 3D

Platform: Windows based
SoftPlot is a graphical design application specifically for theatrical lighting. 2D lighting plots, 3D renders, manage paperwork for all levels of entertainment from theatre to film to TV. Program makes it easy to drag-and-drop lighting fixtures, trusses, and other elements on the design surface. SoftPlot will also manage your paperwork from gel lists to instrument schedules.

stageresearch.com/softplot-3D

Vectorworks Spotlight

Platforms: Windows or Mac
Spotlight is the theatrical side of this powerful CAD program. 2D light plots, 3D models, paperwork is all top notch. Photorealistic renderings of any stage, set, building with lights applied with proper photometrics. Vision 3D previsualize program available for programming most sized light rigs via attached or virtual console.

vectorworks.net/spotlight

Moving Light Assistant v1.3.1

Platforms: Windows and Mac
Moving Light Assistant is an application designed to document both the physical setup and programming information for moving light rigs commonly used in the entertainment industry. It imports data from several consoles to document presets/palettes and cues with photos and descriptions. Electronic Theatre Controls EOS family of consoles. (Presets/Palettes, Cue List & Patch). MA Lighting grandMA1 and grandMA2 consoles, PRG Vx76.

movinglightassistant.com

Realizzer 3D

Platform: Windows based
Previz system Realizzer 3D creates photo realistic designs and users can instantly view a light show in real-time. The software has a comprehensive library with many 3D models included. With the Pro, Ultimate and Studio versions, users also have the ability to simulate complete laser and video playback (Lasergraph DSP & Pangolin Support). Custom-created 3D models can be imported in more than 20 formats.

realizzer.com

Synopsis/LightTools

Platforms: Windows 7+
Handy application for those who would like to design their own light fixtures. It's a 3D optical engineering and design software product that supports virtual prototyping, simulation, optimization, and photorealistic renderings of illumination applications. Create a light source from any geometric model.

synopsys.com

