

Light boxes -- Past And Present

The internet free encyclopedia states that a light box is a container with several light bulbs inside and a pane of frosted glass on top.

The original light boxes were just that, usually made of wood in the shape of a box with light bulbs mounted inside. These light boxes usually got very hot because the bulbs had to be of a high wattage to give the right amount of light. These light boxes were mainly used by photography professionals to view slides and photographic negatives.

Development of the fluorescent tube allowed the light box to do away with the standard light bulb and be replaced by light source which has two major advantages. The fluorescent tube was a much lower wattage and hence the heat given off was much less and also the spread of the light over the complete surface of the light box was much more even.

Due to the latest developments in lighting technology the light box has changed considerably from its original design. The fluorescent tube has become much slimmer reducing down to less than 5mm in diameter. These new tubes are called Cold Cathode Fluorescent lamps ? CCFL's. Other lighting developments have included the use of LED's for lighting.

Using CCFL's a light box can now be made much thinner, in some cases only 18 mm deep. This is achieved by placing the CCFL at the edge of the glass and not behind it. The glass or acrylic is now constructed with deflectors built into it so that when a light is placed at the edge of the glass the light will be deflected to the surface giving an even spread of light across the complete surface of the glass

Mounting the light source at the edge of the diffused glass and also because of the type of lamps used the surface of the light box does not get hot. This is a great advantage when viewing delicate products. The added advantage of using CCFL lamps as a light source is the low power consumption, nearly 90% less than conventional bulbs. They are maintenance free and long lasting approximately 30,000 hours. The colour of the light emitted from a CCFL lamp can be designed to meet the requirements of the light box user.

The modern light box, because of its ultra slim size and lack of radiated heat, can now be used for a considerable number of applications. Poster displays in public places are now wide spread, hospitals and veterinary surgeries use them for X-ray viewing, Colleges and Universities now use them in many departments.

A light box is not just a light in a box but is now a means of displaying posters, menus, analyzing products, treating Seasonal Affective Disorder (SAD) etc. They can also be seen wherever you look in windows, interior displays and signage, including static and rotating units designed to attract customers to a product or service.

About the Author

[Glowlite](#) provides information on the ultra thin light box. Further information on applications and specifications can be found on www.glowlite.co.uk.

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