Will Sarine's New Machines Change Diamond Grading?
Looking at a possible future where grading is more automated

It got lost in the post-election shuffle, but last month, Sarine Technologies released its first-ever clarity-grading machine. Given how its rough-mapping and cut-grading devices have changed the business, it's worth asking: Could Sarine's clarity grading have a similar impact?

Sarine Clarity took "years and years of development," says marketing manager Tamar Brosh. "By using a very specific lighting environment and different focusing of camera lens, we feel we are now able to give an accurate mapping on inclusions. We consider it a real breakthrough."

In fact, this may be almost literally ahead of its time—it's not ready to be released yet. It won't be available for sale until 2017.

"The machine is actually a learning machine," she adds. "The more diamonds it scans, the more accurate it gets. That is why we're not releasing it yet."

The machine was announced along with Sarine Color, a new "more advanced" color-grading device.

All of which makes you wonder if we are entering an era where grading is a lot more automated—and what that means for grading labs.

Brosh says she hopes that labs will embrace the company's machines, the same way they use its cut-measurement technology, and she is careful to say that Sarine doesn't expect to supplant them.

"That's a question people ask a lot," she says. "We are not looking to replace gemologists. There is plenty of work for them to do. We feel this is going to make their work more accurate."

Sarine also doesn't expect to develop its own reports. Still, having a suite of automated-grading devices means a lot more is possible.

"We are using the GIA scale," she says. "We were surprised to hear some were saying you don't need to use that, that Sarine is strong enough to create a new scale."

There are no plans for that, she says. But the fact that the issue has been raised shows we could be entering new territory.