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willing to not wait that long for a season, I expected my low/hate relationship with color management and profiling to follow me to the Pro-1. It did. Then on a lark, remembering your comment, I threw caution to the wind and set the driver to Auto and LR Profile to Managed by Printer. My test image was now 99.9% identical to my 3880 R2C Profile produced reference sample. I have to have the samples side by side to see the variation. It was also marginally truer to my calibrated monitor.

I use the Datacolor test image downloaded from http://www.northlight-images.co.uk/article_papers/test_images.html It was all lost now.

I'm delighted to hear that out-of-the-box accurate color management for high end inkjets may finally be here.

I bought an Epson 7600 waaaay back when it first came out, and despaired of ever getting a worthwhile print from it, until I was fortunate enough to attend Bill Atkinson's printing seminar at George Eastman House. Bill had generated some excellent profiles that managed to linearize the 7600's very non-linear behavior and make it usable. It honestly took me about 6 months to get prints I was happy with, but eventually the results were very good indeed.

The Canon iPF6300 I'm using currently gives very good results with 'canned' profiles, so it does a very good job of keeping itself calibrated. It still pays dividends to follow Charlie Cramer's recommendation to check the "L" values in image shadows with the Info palette in Photoshop, because anything lower than about 10-12 will tend to print so dark that print detail is only visible in "very" bright light.

I believe that Apple calibrates the monitors as part of manufacturing process

John

Chris, my 3880 gives me a very limited selection of paper types to choose from, so I generally use the best available (Epson Ultra Luster) to stand in for papers like Canson Bryeta or Epson Exhibition Fiber. It's either that or use a profile. It's long been a mystery why this is so, but even Epson recommended this paper setting when I called them to ask why I don't see all the Epson papers listed in my printer dialogue.

Chris -

The missing info - Mac OS 10.10.4, Photoshop CS6, Epson 3880, Ilford Galerie Prestige Smooth Heavyweight Matt.

(I've seen a comparative image to Mike's regular email. I don't know if he will pick this up as he is busy - or maybe you have access? Whatever, the two prints are similar but slightly different, with the [smaller] non-profile print being slightly more contrasty, saturated, and stronger; and more accurate to the screen image.)

I ran an A-B test just now.

I ran a print using Photoshop's "Printer [Epson 3880] Manages Color" and one using "Photoshop Manages Color" (using an Eric Chan custom color profile) on one of my favorite and most difficult-to-print images (lots of dark gradations and detail almost lost in the shadows, skin tones, a mix of light sources, lots of fine detail, some blown highlights: bit.ly/1ewNQLu). I printed on my favorite paper (Moab Silver Rag) at the highest quality settings possible.

Except for the color management settings, the source images and other printer settings were identical.

The final output prints are incredibly close to identical.

Only after examining them under good light up close (both my 5500-degree K studio lights and a bright halogen desk lamp) can I see that the Printer Managed print is just a touch more magenta or maybe less yellow than the Photoshop Managed print. And the Photoshop Managed print might have just a tiny bit more contrast. Maybe. Otherwise, shadow details are identical, there's no banding anywhere, no differences in areas where highlights blow out – no issues at all in either print.

I consider that a ringing endorsement of letting the printer manage color, especially for those papers where I don't have a custom profile.

Thanks for the suggestion, Chris!

>> *Proof of concept.* Canned profile (Epson Luster, new P600 printer), versus custom profile:

>> http://digitalslr.net/files/EpsonVsCustomProfile.jpg

To clarify after more testing. The above process, I picked "Colorlyne" not Epson Color as you recommened. What picking Colorlyne appears to do is just select the canned profile. And that's why the blue ball goes black, the profile isn't very good in that respect.

I then used what Chris recommends when using Printer Manages Color; Epson Color Controls, Adobe RGB (1998). Blue balls don't go black, but absolutely not better than my custom profile by a long shot. Here's a view of that:

http://digitalslr.net/files/ProfilesOnJpg.jpg

A PFEG, in sRGB, from a 5D (not using my preferred 105 Macro to show more balls) isn't ideal. But here's my profile (top) versus what Chris recommends (Adobe RGB (1998) using Epson Controls). To my eye, nothing is superior on the output using your method. It's clear what clipping is: Adobe RGB (1998) does here with Greens (ugly banding without profile). Look at how flat the upper blue ball is, no shape like that with the profile. Upper Magenta ball shows banding and more lack of smoothness. Dirty yellow bottom ball.

Other problems. You can't soft proof. All data clips to Adobe RGB (1998) which isn't ideal (both the P600 and 3880 have color gamuts that greatly exceed Adobe RGB (1998)).

Sorry Chris, not working on this end either with my P600 or my 3880 which is very, very similar to your equipment. The custom profile is superior in every respect; smoothness, saturation, how the balls drow in terms of their shape. Clipping to Adobe RGB and not having the ability to soft proof are factors but the bottom line is, the output using Printer Manages Color produces inferior output and this is to an Epson paper (Luster). How can this process work with 3rd party papers of which the Epson driver knows nothing about?

Maybe you should output my targets and let me build you a profile, then compare. I'd be happy to provide this for you as part of the 'proof of concept' of how and why, a good custom profile is going to produce superior output than Printer Manages Color. Before the audience here decides profiles, custom or otherwise are obsolete.

[*DD— Well, now ain't that interesting! Yeah, that looks like crap. I've gotta ask the "is it plugged in?" question: That's printed out via Photoshop, not Lightroom, right? The reason I'm asking is because your test TIFF was created under Lightroom, and one reader has already reported that Lightroom doesn't do this trick well.*

I've downloaded your test TIFF, and I'll print it out here after I run a few errands. Let's see if I get the same result at this end that you're seeing. — PointPerfect]

Chris -
What gamma do you see when you calibrate your monitor to D50?

[*Dave! — 2.2 —* Chris]

But if you are using a 3rd-party paper, one which doesn't respond to the inks in exactly the same ways as one of the OEM papers, then nothing in the printing pipeline is accounting for those differences in rendering, and the quality of the results is likely to be down to luck.

This is my question. I do not typically use Epson papers with my R3000. So how do you account for the differences in paper when using "Printer Manages Colors"?

Interesting article. Thank you.

What profile are you using for soft proofing? Or does Printer Managing Colours render soft proofing unnecessary too?

[*Jason — I don't find soft proofing especially useful for my work; it doesn't tell me well enough what a print will actually look like. So, I couldn't really say the best way to make use of it with this approach.* — Chris]

I've been using an Epson R2880 running MK & a 4880 with PK & can attest to the accuracy of Chris's statement - was using Canson Baryta Photographique on the 4880 & the difference was startling - much easier to get a good print when the printer was left to own devices. Have recently been using Harman by Hahnemuhle Matt Fibre Duo to print a limited edition book & again found the R2880's management spot-on. Anyway, back to sewing signatures...

All my print tests shown were printed out of Photoshop CC 2015.

Chris,

Since you are reviewing the new Epson printer, do you know if they are planning to add a windows print feature for RGB? I am currently using Mouseposh in Seattle for custom printing and they do their work in RGB, not sRGB. Regarding the new ink sets, can they handle the pro-photo color space? I am interested in this color space but have not used it.

[*Mathew — Sorry, I don't do Windows, so I wouldn't know about that. There is no printer out there that can fully handle the ProPhoto color space. But, all modern quality printers can produce colors that fall a little outside of Adobe RGB. While Adobe RGB is a roughly good match for printer gamuts, it doesn't catch all the colors a printer can reproduce. Working in ProPhoto RGB does add usable hues to your workspace.* — Chris]

Chris, a link for you: What it's like to own a Tesla Model S: A customer's review of his market car

Much bad advice and simply incorrect information in this thread - and not at all surprised to see someone who actually has worked properly in this area contradicting this advice (AR).

With actual, simple tests it's quite easy to demonstrate "really good" custom profiles still significantly outperform printer colour management (and as the machines, particularly the at best mediocre retinas, drift over time - you will see greater screen <> print divergence of course if you fail to continue calibration). If you can't see this in your tests, your tests are not good enough. Or your 'custom printer profiles' are not good enough. Or, likely, both.

Custom profiles, properly made on high end equipment - and I don't include the ColorSmart in this (given it's the most basic consumer level device for profile making) - are still a lot better overall.

Of course it depends a lot on the particular image you're actually rendering - many simple ones will come out looking much the same, but you can't draw conclusions about every image from one image or even a few. Custom profiles really come in to their own with difficult images, and a lot of it is about separation and clarity of tones more gamut range etc. of course.

Honestly, if you don't use soft proofing (which is probably a strong reflection on the quality of the tools you're using, and profiles) - if you're using colormunki profiles, and you're comparing with mediocre screens rather than, say Eizo CGs and NEC PAs properly calibrated - then you're really not in a good place to be commenting on the efficacy of printer profiles at all because you're simply not using them to full effect (or even using what I would consider a custom profile at all).

If you're saying that printer colour management can sometimes perform as well as, or maybe even do better than, Munki profiles specifically - and on the Mac only given the sRGB PC PCS scenario - then sure, perhaps.
But drawing serious conclusions about custom profiles in general from that is a very long bow to draw.

BTW - working in ProPhoto because it can, in theory, hold tones a printer can reproduce that a smaller space can't - is utterly pointless (and potentially damaging due to less smoothness etc) - unless those tones actually exist in the capture in question. And your raw converter can show you this definitively on a per image basis.

Put simply - the smallest colour space that contains the actually captured colours completely (with a small amount of headroom for small tone edits) - is the best space to use for that particular image.

Dear Mike, Steve, John, and others,

All right, you want to talk about the Tesla.

Yes, acceleration. More than a same person needs. It's the electric motor thing — Electrics have incredible torque at low RPM; the opposite of an internal combustion engine. So, they can launch out of the starting gate like a bat out of hell. The low-end Tesla has more acceleration than I will ever need. The highest end upgrade, the "insane mode," pulls about 1G until the speed maxes out around 130 mph.

Honestly, I totally don't care. I've never owned a muscle car in my life, never have had any particular interest in doing so. Now, Paula on the other hand. She likes muscle.

I'm much more interested in the all-electric part and the range. John, the range on the low-end Tesla S is enough for a round-trip to Sacramento or to Monterey (Carmel if you're willing to push it, but that's on the edge). We never go further than that unless we're taking off on a long road trip (happens much less than once a year). We rarely even go that far; maybe once a year. So a Tesla S will do us just fine. If we need to take a road trip, we will rent a car. (On the other hand, the Tesla X is worth considering because of the cargo capacity.)

The reason we haven't looked at any of the (relatively) low priced electrics, even though we both love electrics, is because they don't have the range. We may never go much further than 200 miles, one way, but we routinely go 50 miles. A car that doesn't have a range of at least 125-150 miles is just too iffy, and that kills the low-end electrics for us.

What I'm really interested in is the ergonomics and the smarts. Super smarts. I could spend a lot of space trying to explain what a nice job they've done with that, but the best way I can explain it is that it's like a well-designed Apple product. It's just right, and smart, and it's clever. And there are plenty of people out there who'll say, "Chris, why did you blow $K on a retina iMac when you could have built yourself a nice Windows box?" and I'll say "You just don't understand."

pax \ Chris
[Please excuse any word-salad. MacSpeech is training!]
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-- Chris's Online Gallery http://chris.com
-- Digital Restoration http://photo-repair.com
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This is a pretty funny essay written from the POV of an electric car owner encountering an internal combustion engine car for the first time: http://bodachsbowden.se/test-drive-of-a-petrol-car/

I guess that I must be really confused. I run a Win 7 system with an Epson 3880 (that replaced a broken 4900). My monitor is calibrated regularly to D50 (the calibrator reminds me, biweekly). I print from Qimage, printer controls (recommended to me 5-6 years ago by a local custom lab manager), with color mode set to "Adobe RGB" – a choice in the print driver, under "automatic" – been there for the last two printers, at least. This workflow seems to work quite well (I just checked and the same choices come up going through PSCS6, following Chris's directions as stated above). As a Windows user, what am I missing in choosing the printer color mode?

Also, I don't soft proof anymore as that never seemed to actually reflect the end results.

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It doesn't match? That's due to how you've calibrated the display. See:
http://www.luminous-landscape.com/tutorials/why_are_my_prints_too_dark.shtml

To see how differing profiles will affect the soft proof, load one for say Glossy paper, one for Matt, make sure you have the Simulate Paper Color and Black Ink check boxes ON. See a difference? Ideally, you'd have a calibration of your display for each paper based on this specific soft proof.

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