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Importance of Custom Printer Profiles »

Monday, 27 July 2015

Where Can You Buy Custom Profiles?

Folks, I'm spinning this off as a separate topic.

The title pretty much says it all. If you are using custom printer profiles and you're not rolling your own, who's making them for you these days? I used to recommend Cathy and Eric but they've long been out of the business. (That's "long" as measured in Internet-years, which is a lot like dog-years... except faster.)

Readers, what are your recommendations? Inquiring minds want to know.

Ctein, TOP Technical Editor

(who is posting on-and-off while Mike's nomadic)

(To see all the comments, click on the "Comments" link below.)

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Posted on Monday, 27 July 2015 at 01:33 PM in Ctein, Digital Techniques, Photo-tech,
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Comments

I use ImagePrint and find my habit of switching papers and sizes makes it worth the cost. I know it is not for everyone, but I have saved considerable time, costs and paper from using their profiles with my printers.

Posted by: Darlene Almeida | Monday, 27 July 2015 at 02:02 PM

Amazing! I used to use Cathy and Eric too. I will be very interested to see whom people recommend. Thanks for posing this question.

Posted by: Kurt Kramer | Monday, 27 July 2015 at 02:06 PM

I get my profiles from the paper manufacturers. The better companies, e.g. Ilford, Hahnemuhle, Canson do a very good job with profiles.

Back in the days when I needed an ImagePrint RIP, ImagePrint would make profiles upon request.

Posted by: Stephen Scharf | Monday, 27 July 2015 at 02:15 PM

Since I don't do photography professionally, I have no need for high end papers. Red River's products satisfy my needs, and they provide printer model specific profiles for their papers. I've been happy with them.

Posted by: Mike R | Monday, 27 July 2015 at 02:23 PM

I became dis-satisfied with the paper manufacturers' profiles maybe 4 years ago. I found the custom-made profiles to be superior. Maybe that has changed since 2010-2011. Might try them again.

Posted by: Kurt Kramer | Monday, 27 July 2015 at 02:40 PM

"Rolling your own?"...ooh we have a west coast vibe now...variety is the spice of life...I like it!

Posted by: Richard | Monday, 27 July 2015 at 03:17 PM

Chromix Color Valet Pro offers nice profiles at very reasonable rates.

Best results when a friend can provide custom profiles using expensive EyeOne gear.

Jeff

Posted by: Jeff | Monday, 27 July 2015 at 03:26 PM

I believe licensing restrictions of the hardware/software makers (like Xrite) put the custom profile services out of business.

A BAD development in my opinion.

Posted by: Jeff in Boston | Monday, 27 July 2015 at 03:33 PM

http://www.digitaldog.net

[Steven — Oh yeah, that guy. He just **might** know what he's doing. — Ctein]

Posted by: Steven Friedman | Monday, 27 July 2015 at 03:59 PM

In the UK, I used Native Digital at Warwick. Sadly they ceased business earlier this year and I don't know where else would be good. I'd really like advice from any other UK-based TOP readers.

Posted by: John Ironside | Monday, 27 July 2015 at 04:08 PM

Imagescience in Australia are good and well priced.

Posted by: Rod Thompson | Monday, 27 July 2015 at 04:26 PM

I bought some from Michael Gordon (<http://www.michael-gordon.com/page/customRGBprofile/>), and I've been satisfied with them.

I run an Epson Artisan 1430, which is one of their higher-end wide format printers that is NOT considered (by most paper manufacturers, anyway) to be a "professional" printer, so even though I frequently use Ilford papers, their profiles don't include the Artisan 1430. Thus, I found Michael's profiles to be useful—though I will definitely be giving your printer-controlled tips a try.

Posted by: Ed Eubanks | Monday, 27 July 2015 at 04:49 PM

Here in Australia Image Science is the go to place for printer profiles and I've been using them for years with good results. However, since I've been using Canson papers and didn't get custom profiles made, the canned profiles from Canson have been outstanding. Of course for black and white I always use the ABW mode on the 3880 and will be trying Ctein's suggestion of letting the printer manage colour as well.

Posted by: Kefyn Moss | Monday, 27 July 2015 at 05:20 PM

The canned profiles for current Epson Stylus Pro models are darn good. What really matters more is having an Eizo or comparable monitor.

[Bob - I can't agree with you on that. All the canned Epson profiles I've tried have been pretty lousy. Both compared to the profiles I roll myself and to printer-managed color. - Ctein]

Posted by: Bob Rosinsky | Monday, 27 July 2015 at 06:37 PM

Further to Kefyn Moss's post - I did have custom profiles made by one of the service providers recommended twice above for a couple of Canson papers, and tested them against the canned profiles available from Canson's website. I could not find any differences - both work really well.

Posted by: Peter Barnes | Monday, 27 July 2015 at 07:54 PM

Peter Barnes: Whom did you use? I only see Cathy and Eric mentioned twice and they are both out of business.

Posted by: Kurt Kramer | Monday, 27 July 2015 at 09:51 PM

I use Imageprint too and second Darlene's comments.

Posted by: Jeff Kott | Tuesday, 28 July 2015 at 12:32 AM

Last time I had profiles made (some years ago) I used a guy called Chris Woodhouse at a site called ktpotonics. He did a good job on two profiles. He doesn't seem to be doing it any more (the ktpotonics site doesn't exist any more). I'm still using the profiles.

Anthony

Posted by: Anthony Shaughnessy | Tuesday, 28 July 2015 at 02:03 AM

Try Image Science (imagescience.com.au). But you are going to have to mail prints to Oz. Works fine for because they're local.

Posted by: Michael Bearman | Tuesday, 28 July 2015 at 08:21 AM

I find the whole color management business to be fascinating. I cannot manage to reconcile the reality that color is a subjective, highly malleable, construct of the brain that is only loosely related to the real world, and the great efforts one can expend to produce... something which matches something else more and more closely.

Wiser heads than mine have been thinking about this far longer than I have, of course. I get that there's a standard observer who's pretty close to most people, and that there are standards for approximating what that standard observer will see in such and such conditions, and so on, but somewhere around there I lose the thread.

Mainly I'm happy to not worry about it.

Posted by: Andrew Molitor | Tuesday, 28 July 2015 at 12:15 PM

I am extremely pleased with Image Print for my 3880. Not only are the profiles excellent and available instantly on demand, but the ability to soft proof grayscale images is very valuable to me as a predominantly B&W photographer. You cannot soft proof in ABW. Is IP worth the cost? For me, the answer is yes. I cannot answer for others.

Posted by: Rob | Tuesday, 28 July 2015 at 10:38 PM

Rob, I'm curious if IP fixed an issue I saw many years ago with their profiles (for years I too was an ImagePrint user). Basically I saw issues with all their profiles with saturated blues shifting towards magenta. It's not an uncommon problem with some profile building products. My Gamut Test File would be a good test, it's got very saturated blues among other colors:

http://www.digitaldog.net/files/Gamut_Test_File_Flat.tif

I pleaded with John P there for years to fix this, has he? TIA.

[Ctein comments: Andrew, my experience is that it doesn't even take a ProPhoto-saturated blue to do that. Happens with lots of sky blues, even in Adobe RGB space. I see this in most canned profiles, which is why I rate them as inferior.

Posted by: Andrew Rodney | Wednesday, 29 July 2015 at 09:49 AM

To Kurt Kramer: I got my custom profiles from Image Science, a Melbourne, Australia, business.

To Andrew Molitor: Yes, colour is such a subjective construct of the brain that talking about it in absolute terms does not make a lot of sense to me either. But that is not why I think colour management is important. For me, the easier it is to get my prints looking like the image on the monitor the sweeter life is. Wasting time, ink and paper on hit and miss test prints is so last century.

Posted by: Peter Barnes | Wednesday, 29 July 2015 at 03:55 PM

I recently printed two landscape photos with large blue skies: <http://goo.gl/4CTheY> and <http://goo.gl/UobHHV> using ImagePrint, 17x22" Museo Max paper and an Epson 3880. I cannot see any color differences between the Lightroom catalog photos or the prints.

Posted by: Darlene Almeida | Friday, 31 July 2015 at 02:44 PM

Eire Kunsman at Booksmart studios does a great job with them. They also created a lot of the canned profiles for some of the manufacturers, (Canson was the one I know off the top of my head) as well as the individual ones people send in.

<http://www.booksmartstudio.com/>

Posted by: Chris | Sunday, 02 August 2015 at 11:27 PM

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