



Digital Logic

Color Management: It's all about control.

Color Management Glossary

ColorSync

Developed by Apple Computer and built into the Mac OS, ColorSync is the industry-standard tool for managing color across multiple devices.

ICC Profile

The International Color Consortium is an internationally accredited committee that sets standards for color profiles. An ICC Profile is a file format that communicates measured color output of a system or device in response to a known input.

CMM

Color Management Modules reference ICC profiles and translate color from one color space to another.

Color Experts

Digital Logic makes color management simple. Contact us at 312 217.4231 or visit us online at forgetcomputers.com

What is color management?

Color management is all about controlling color. The goal is to have systems in place to control color from device A, to device B, and ultimately to device C and D (i.e. from scanner to monitor to color laser printer to offset printer). Wow! That would be cool if it really worked! Well, it does work. The only difficult part is getting started. The tools required for color management are ColorSync, the right calibration and profiling tools, and a little color management know-how.

What is ColorSync?

ColorSync is part of the Macintosh operating system architecture. ColorSync works with scanners, digital cameras, monitors, printers, copiers, proofers, and presses. ColorSync is also supported in all leading image-editing and page-layout applications. ColorSync is an enabling technology that allows computer software and hardware to accurately render consistent color. This means if you own a Mac you already have this powerful system-level software waiting for you. All you have to do is use it.

We all know how difficult it is to maintain consistent color throughout a workflow. Color shifts can cause lost time and lost sales if products or designs are not represented accurately. ColorSync helps save time and money by enabling accurate capture, preview, and output of color documents through the use of unique International Color Consortium (ICC) profiles. These profiles help ColorSync compensate for color deviations in scanners, monitors and color printers. Through the use of color management modules (CMMs) images are converted from one color space to another using the information embedded in the image profile.

How can I make this work for me?

Color management is often misunderstood. Many users try to control color during the middle or at the end of the workflow (when the job goes to press). The only way color management will work is if it's part of the workflow from the beginning. There are three parts to effectively controlling color.

- 1) **QUALITY CONTROL:** Start with the best color obtainable from current input devices.
- 2) **CALIBRATION:** Maintain proper calibration of your input and output devices.
- 3) **PROFILING:** After proper calibration, create an ICC profile for use by ColorSync.



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TIP Color management will produce great results in your office. It will work even better when all parties involved in a project participate. Talk to your vendors (printers, photographers, designers) about color management. The more people you get involved, the more time and frustration you'll save.

With proper calibration and profiling, your monitor can be used for soft proofing. In addition, inexpensive scanners and color printers can be used to generate color-accurate client proofs. Today, many digital presses can even be profiled. Photographers can take advantage of ColorSync by using digital cameras or by having their images scanned appropriately with embedded profiles. Color management even extends to digital video. QuickTime's built-in ColorSync color conversion features allow producers to ensure accurate color while repurposing broadcast video for web, CD-ROM or DVD delivery.

Solutions

There are many color management products available and they vary wildly in price and capability. In addition to budget, your level of investment may depend on your level of color-tolerance. You will often get better results from more expensive equipment. However, if you're currently not controlling color at all we suggest you get started with entry-level tools and move up from there.

Conclusion

Apple has built powerful color control tools (ColorSync) into the Mac's operating system. All you need to get started in color management is the proper calibration and profiling tools (available from third-party vendors) along with setup, configuration and training support from Digital Logic. Save time and money. Contact Digital Logic today to start a color management system that will provide predictable results.

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