

Color Management Side Bar By Jeff Schewe

While it may seem counterintuitive that color management can have a profound impact on a B&W workflow, it does. How you have your Photoshop color settings configured does indeed have an impact.

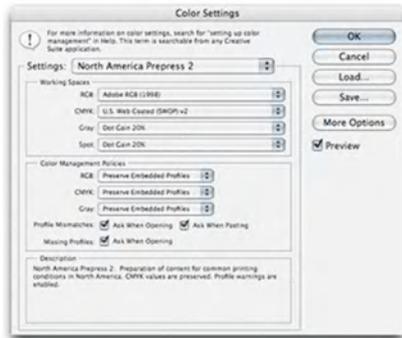


Fig: CM-01-CM-settings-default

Many photographers may use the “North American Prepress 2” settings...and while this isn’t a bad decision, it really doesn’t go far enough if you wish to have an optimal color and B&W color management setup.



Fig: CM-03-color-settings

I suggest clicking the “More Options” button to get the fully expanded Color Settings dialog box.

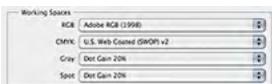


Fig: CM-04-color-settings-detail

In particular, the Working Spaces portion of the dialog is vital to B&W settings. In general, you want to match either your RGB Working Space gamma to your Gray Working Space or match the Gray Dot Gain to your CMYK Working Space. In this case, since we are primarily concerned with ink jet output, the Gray Working Space should match Adobe RGB (1998), which is a gamma of 2.2. The gamma of other color spaces you may be using vary; for ProPhoto RGB and ColorMatch RGB, it’s 1.8, for sRGB it’s also 2.2.

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Fig: CM-06-gray-gamma-detail

Click on the Gray Working Spaces drop down menu and change the settings to 2.2 if you are working in Adobe RGB.



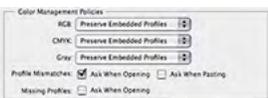
Fig: CM-07-custom

This will change your color settings to “Custom”. At this point, I highly suggest you save out this new setting so you can easily call it up in the future.



Fig: CM-09-color-settings-list

By saving the color settings you can easily select a different setting from within the saved settings drop menu.



CM-11-SCHEWE-ARGB-detail

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In this setting, two additional options have been unselected, the Ask When Pasting and Ask When Opening warning dialogs have been turned off. Why? Because when pasting you'll pretty much ALWAYS want to honor the embedded profile and when a profile is missing, it's far better to get the file open first and then use the Assign Profile command from within Photoshop. Why not assign the profile when opening? Because there's no way to visually check that the profile you assign is correct—there's no way to preview the results. When you use the Assign Profile command, you are given the option to view what the image looks like upon assigning to confirm that the profile is correct.

Assuming you have your Photoshop Color Settings correctly set, the next step is to make sure you correctly configure the Photoshop Print With Preview settings. The dialog has changed between Photoshop CS and earlier versions and is new in Photoshop CS2.

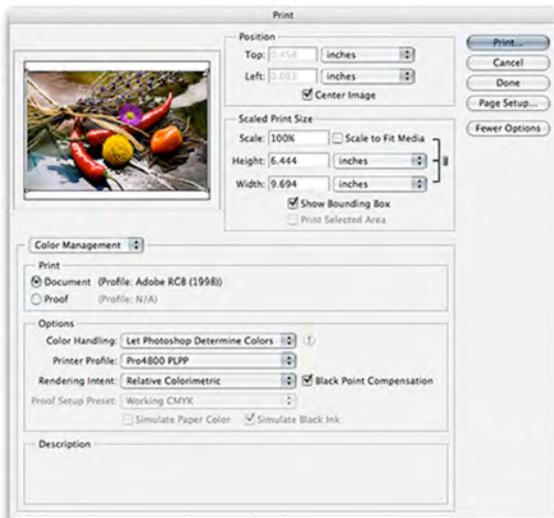


Fig: CM-12-print-preview-color

When printing out using ICC profiles—either those supplied by the printer or, better, ones you have had made to custom profile your own printer/ink/paper you'll want to set Photoshop's Print With Preview Color Management Options to Let Photoshop Determine Colors under Color Handling. Select your specific Printer Profile and then select the Rendering Intent that best handles your image transform. You can use Photoshop's Soft Proofing capability to help you determine which rendering intent will be best for your specific image with your printer/ink/paper combination.



Fig: CM-14-no-col

Then, in your printer driver, make sure that color management is turned off or set to No Color Adjustment. This terminology will vary depending on your specific printer driver and your operating system. But, it's important to only have one single color management system operative at one time. In this case, we want Photoshop to be in charge of colors, not the printer driver.

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However, when printing using the Epson Advanced B&W Photo mode of the driver, you'll need to change your settings to accommodate the driver.



Fig: CM-15-print-preview-bw

In this specific case, you'll need to turn off or disable Photoshop's Color Management and let the print driver be in charge.



Fig: CM-16-adv-bw

Then, while in the Epson printer driver, you'll select the Advanced B&W Photo mode of the driver and set your B&W settings as you wish to use them.