

Colour Profiles

Art & Design

What an ICC profile does, and why a file without one is undefined.

An ICC profile records what a device's colour numbers actually mean. Without one, RGB 200, 30, 40 is only three numbers, and every device guesses differently.

WEB DEFAULT
sRGB

FOR PRINT
ask for the profile

- Embed a profile in every file you hand over.
- sRGB is the safe default for screen and web.
- Adobe RGB is wider, but only if used end to end.
- CMYK profiles are specific to press, ink and stock.
- Rendering intent decides how out-of-gamut colour maps.
- Perceptual for photographs, relative for flat colour.

LOOK FOR IT

Soft proofing shows a file through the print profile on a calibrated screen, before anything is sent.

Calibrate the monitor first. Colour management on an uncalibrated screen is guessing with extra steps in it.