

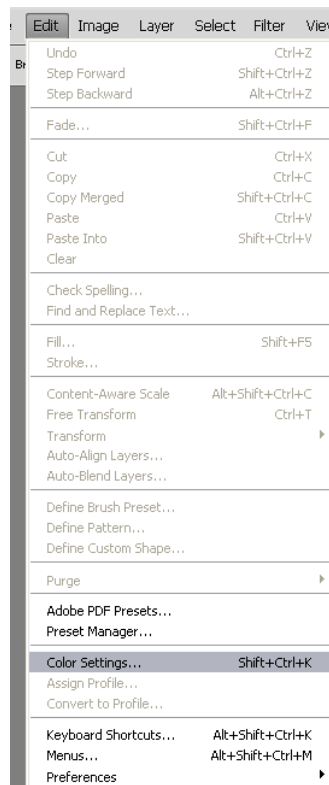
Printing Digital Images – setting colour preferences in Photoshop

Finding the colour settings

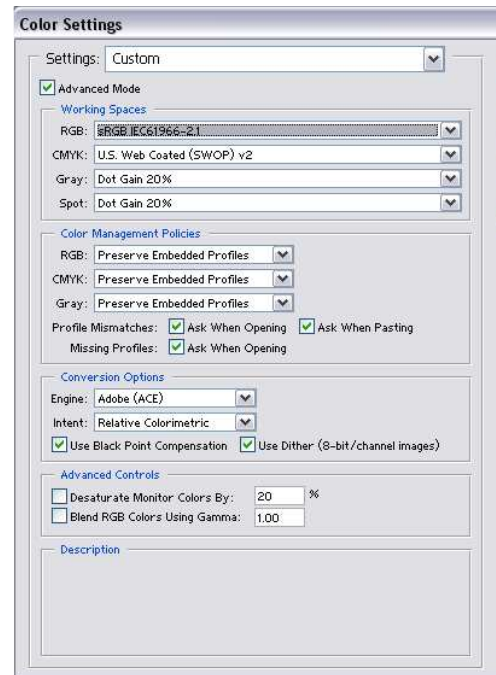
Before you do any image editing, you need to check that the colour preferences are set correctly.

Here's how...

From the Menu Bar, choose Edit > Colour Settings

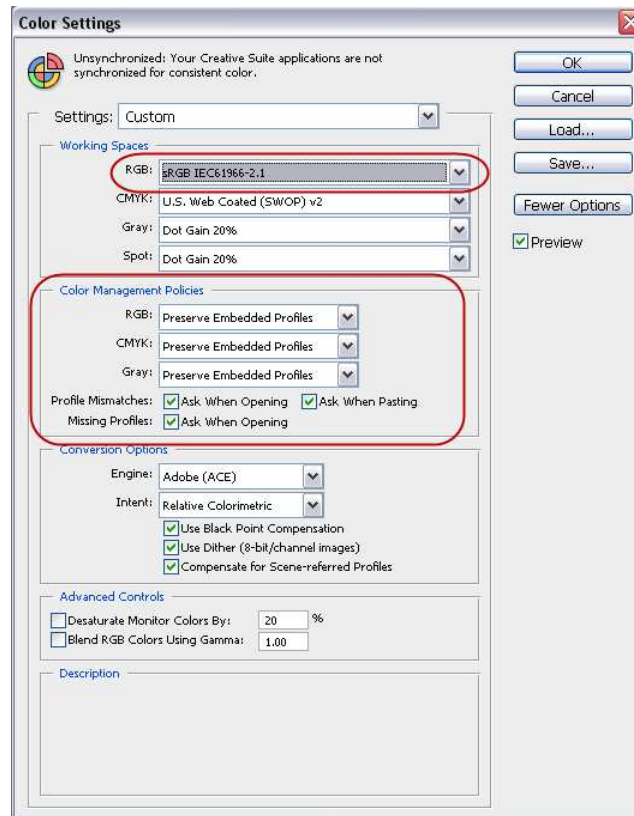


This screen shot is from Photoshop 7.



Choices to make

This screen shot, from Photoshop CS4, shows the things we need to check...



Working space
sRGB

The first decision to make is the choice of working space. The option shown, sRGB, would be the best choice if:

- The images are to be displayed only on a computer monitor or via a digital projector.
- You are preparing images to be printed commercially.

Adobe RGB

Adobe is a larger colour space than sRGB and is a better option if you intend to print your own photographs on an inkjet printer.

Other options for working space

It would be wise to ignore the other options – Apple RGB, ColorMatch RGB and ProPhoto RGB. Adobe RGB has essentially superseded the first two.

ProPhoto RGB has a very large gamut – far larger than can be displayed on a colour monitor. However, modern printers (e.g. the Epsoms using K3 inks) are capable of producing colours that fall outside the gamut of Adobe RGB.

When using RAW to capture 16-bit images and where there is a need to maintain as much colour information from the original capture as possible, ProPhoto is worth considering.

Adobe Photoshop Lightroom uses a colour space very similar to ProPhoto.

CMYK, gray and spot options

If you intend to print your own images or to have them printed by a photo lab, these settings are irrelevant and can be left “as is”.

You will only need to concern yourself with these if you are sending work to a printing press.

Important

Some people get confused because their inkjet printers use a combination of cyan, magenta, yellow and black inks. Because of this they mistakenly believe that they should convert their images to CMYK for printing.

This is not the case. The print drivers are designed to accept RGB data only.

Colour management policies

At first sight, this section can be quite forbidding. If this is the case with you, then just use the settings shown in the screenshot on the previous page!

If you want to know why, read on...

Photoshop assumes that you will work with files that are tagged with the profiles from your chosen working space. For example, if you set Photoshop to use sRGB and import JPEG files from a digital camera that are also tagged sRGB then that's just how "Photoshop likes it". If, however, your Photoshop preference is Adobe RGB and you import a file tagged with sRGB, then Photoshop needs to know how to resolve the disparity. This is where colour management policies come into play.

If you choose the settings shown on the previous page and open a file that has a different profile to your chosen working space, Photoshop will ask you what to do.

This leaves you to decide what should happen so you can make a conscious decision.

In practice, if you set your camera to tag images with sRGB and set Photoshop to use sRGB, there will be no conflict and you can rest easy. The same applies if you set your camera to Adobe RGB and use this as your Photoshop working space.

If you shoot RAW images, then the RAW processor will allow you to specify the profile to be used for tagging your images.

The remaining options

The conversion options and advanced controls are beyond the scope of this basic tutorial. Leaving them as shown above is the safest bet until you have more experience of colour management. Then you'll need to study a good book on Photoshop.