III. Photoshop compensation/proofing

In Photoshop, make sure you have calibrated your monitor and the Photoshop settings to match your output device.

To “soft-proof” your document on the monitor to approximate the color shift on a specific output device, go to the View menu, and make sure Proof Colors is checked. If it isn’t, select it and notice the color shift in the image. (especially noticeable on an RGB image when Proof Setup is in CMYK mode) To change what output you are soft-proofing, go to the Proof Setup pull-down.

Note that you can also preview a Windows RGB color space, which is very handy for previewing images as they’ll appear on a Windows’ PC web browser!

You can also create a custom proof setup, so that you can easily check how the image will look on a specific printer.

Many epsons will install the full range of printer descriptions complete with different separation tables for different paper stocks!

(Notice these choices maybe available in the Photoshop Color Settings dialogue as well.)

If you will be soft-proofing images from the same color space (i.e. mac RGB to Windows RGB) choose the Preserve Color Numbers option.

If you are soft-proofing a CMYK or print device, you can choose the Simulate: Paper White and/or Ink Black choices. These settings will vary with the printer.

The idea is to experiment by making a proof print (as described below) then experiment with different settings in your proof setup, so that you will get to see on screen what your prints will actually look like when you go to View to Proof Colors.

You may need to compensate for an input device such as a scanner. An easy way to do this is scan a known entity – such as a color input or grayscale photographic card.

Then add an Adjustment Layer to bring it where it should be (Layer menu, New Adjustment Layer…i like to use Levels for this.)

Save the Adjustment Layer so you can re-load it when ever you need to have the same compensation for something coming off of that scanner.

Printing:

Be sure to load the proper printer description files when you install your printer. This will ensure that Photoshop creates the optimum separation tables when printing to your specific printer, especially if it has additional inks (such as an inkjet).

In the Print dialogue box, check the media type and any printer-specific options. If it is a PostScript printer, go to the General pull-down, to Printer Specific Options and check the color and quality modes available to you.

Whenever you get a new printer, or recalibrate a high-end printer, Check the settings and calibration. Make a test page with known entity colors (in RGB mode) – swatches of 255 Red, Green and Blue and 100% each of Yellow, Cyan, Magenta, and black. Print it and see which printer-specific settings yeild the best results.