Color Management in Digital Photography

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Reviewer: Veronica Primeaux

In his book Color Management in Digital Photography, Brad Hinkel's main goal is to enable digital photographers to match their photographic prints to the image they see on the computer monitor. He includes three basic tasks designed to overcome technical issues that make this goal difficult to achieve.
1. Configure your software for color management.
2. Setup your monitor to display images accurately.
3. Setup your printer to print images correctly.

Hinkel uses a common sense ten-step program for setting up a color management system.

The individual chapters clearly outline elements in each of the ten steps:
1. Choose a Color Space
2. Get a Good Monitor
3. Create a Good Work Environment
4. Calibrate and Profile Your Monitor
5. Get a Good Printer
6. Create Basic Prints
7. Test Your Color Management System
8. Create Advanced Prints
9. Obtain Profiles
10. Adjusting Colors for Advanced Printing

The section on color seeks to clarify the limitations of devices such as monitors and printers to render real world color. He compares sRGB (Adobe Photoshop default color space) which is used by many software and hardware products in the market today to Adobe RGB which is the standard for high-end digital photo printing.

In the chapter "Create a Good Work Environment" he points out items that can have an impact on color management. Room lighting, glare on the screen, distracting colors or images on walls in the background and the use of a good proofing light are all elements that can affect color perception.

The reader will find detailed specifications for software and devices that can be used for monitor calibration and printing. These reviews give specific recommendations, both pros and cons for Windows and Mac products.

Hinkel states that he may "oversimplify and leave out some details of color management," but even this version geared for the average person can be a bit technical. I found the screen-captured diagrams of Photoshop dialog menus easy to understand but very small and hard to read; but the text explaining procedure is easy to follow.

I find this book to be very helpful to photographers struggling with complex procedures to produce good prints of images captured by the camera.