



IMAGING SOFTWARE

Lots of new goodies but tiptoe lightly around color management setup

Adobe Photoshop 5.0

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PHOTOSHOP 5 IS HERE — AND I'M HAPPY, AND CONFUSED, AND nervous.

Reading the Adobe Reviewer's Guide is bound to leave anyone feeling happy. After all, Adobe has made this upgrade truly worthy of its "point-zero" designation with the integration of a multitude of new tools and tricks.

But when one attempts to digest Adobe's STOP THE PRESS white paper issued in May which walks us through *Photoshop 5's* radical new approach to color management, things get a little fuzzier.

Things start to get very disconcerting after I read a piece

by well-known *Photoshop* expert Dan Margulis in ELECTRONIC PUBLISHING ([www.electronic-publishing.com](http://www.electronic-publishing.com)). Margulis' statement that "Despite its undoubted merits, on the whole *Photoshop 5* is a major disservice to the [professional graphics] industry" stops me dead in my tracks.

**DOES ADOBE WANT TO CONFUSE ME?**

The single most significant change with *Photoshop 5* has nothing to do with what it does, but rather *how* it does it.

(left, from top to bottom): Photoshop 5's new color management dialogue boxes: Profile Mismatch asks how to handle the color space conversion of a new RGB file; Missing Profile looks for the embedded profile in a CMYK image; RGB Setup and CMYK Setup under Color Settings let you define monitor color and print output preferences as in Photoshop 4.

We are now propelled into the world of ICC profiles and ColorSync color management with this new version — like it or not. Every file we open demands a decision regarding the color

space assumptions we start from, unless we either turn the whole dang thing off (which is what Margulis recommends) or swallow the ICC-based workflow in its entirety by calibrating everything in sight (and out of sight, too).

Adobe obviously realized it needed to explain this approach to color management a little better. STOP THE PRESS walks us through the process of customizing *Photoshop's* new Profile Setup in four key areas: defining the working color space, embedding profiles with images, defining the color space of legacy files, and handling profile mismatches for files which don't live in your working color space.

I strongly suggest that anyone diving into *Photoshop 5* should read this 11-page document before passing Go.

Personally, I took Margulis' advice and ignored all of it.

And what's wrong with color management? you ask.

Well, nothing — in theory. But Adobe has adopted some peculiar assumptions in its *Photoshop* default settings, particularly the use of sRGB as its default color space. sRGB is the new PC color space championed by Hewlett-Packard and Microsoft, and is designed to reflect the standards for HDTV broadcast but is far removed from the requirements for pre-press. It is also based on a PC's 2.2 gamma, as opposed to the graphics industry (read: Macintosh) standard of 1.8.

This apparent genuflection by Adobe to the Windows world would seem to leave high end graphics people to fend for themselves. And as Margulis points out, "Exchanging RGB files with unknown parties is no longer safe...*Photoshop 5*, by default, alters RGB colors *without warning*."

Given that if it ain't broke, why fix it, my inclination is to turn off the entire color management setup — and hope fervently that everyone else I exchange files with does the same.

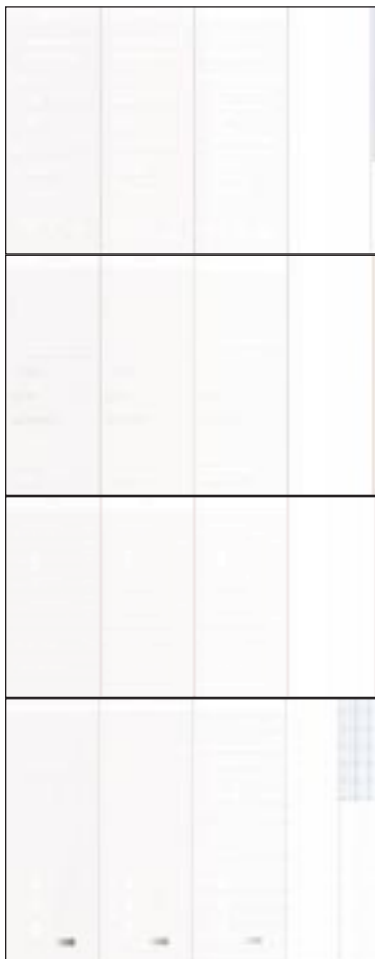
**MAKING MY PRINTER NERVOUS IS NOT OK**

But then the plot thickens.

According to Margulis, "Ever since *Photoshop* was introduced, people have complained that it delivers muddy-looking separations. Adobe, attempting to respond, blames *Photoshop's* dot gain assumptions. It could have been solved by raising the default dot gain from 20 per cent to, say, 22 per cent, which is SWOP standard. Instead, in a monumental



(above) This is the new Profile Setup dialogue box in Photoshop 5, where the critical decision is made to either use ICC profiles, or ignore them.



blunder, Adobe kept the default at 20 per cent but *changed what 20 per cent means.*"

Now I'm getting nervous.

Suddenly the 23% dot gain I have used in the past with *Photoshop 4* and which has been tried and true for the press I know doesn't mean the same?

Margulis continues, "In *Photoshop 4*, the default was 20 per cent, which most users found too low. In *Photoshop 5*, the default is still 20 per cent, but it equates to about 27 per cent in *PS 4*...20 per cent in *PS 4* equates to about 11 per cent in *PS 5*."

Yet the only reference to this point that I can find in Adobe's white paper refers to using the Tables CMYK setup, where, in a note following the explanation about saving *Photoshop 4* Separation Table settings as a *PS 5* ICC profile, Adobe says: "You will notice a change between the dot gain values in *Photoshop 4.0x* and *5.0* when you open a CMYK separation table saved from *Photoshop 4.0x*. This is because *Photoshop 5.0* no longer uses the same values in determining dot gain for CMYK documents as it did in previous versions. *Photoshop 5.0* now uses a modified method for generating CMYK dot gain values that is based on feedback from the printing industry. The Separation tables will appear the same between the two versions."

Color me confused and nervous. Only time and experience will let me see just how different *Photoshop 5* will be.

**LET'S TALK HAPPY IMAGINEERING TALK**

I'm delighted to see Adobe finally answer the bell with respect to multiple undos. *Photoshop's* new History palette, which catalogues actions performed on an image, is a definite blessing for anybody (like me) who has ever wanted to take another shot at applying an effect or a filter but didn't because it would have taken too much time to redo from scratch. Likewise, the History Brush, which lets you paint the contents of a previous image stage on top of the current one, adds a whole new dimension to reworking an image.

Lest we get too excited, it must be pointed out that the RAM and hard drive space needed to retain a history of up to 100 actions is considerable. And if you do a little cloning to touch up artefacts on an image, each click will be recorded as an action, wiping out your previous history in a hurry.

Regular GRAPHIC EXCHANGE prepress contributor John Korchok comments, "This is something that should have been there in version 3. Every other image editor on the market had this one figured out a long time ago."

Oh, well. Better late than never.

On a similar note, the addition of an editable type tool is also long overdue, and in combination with the new Layer Effects menu for creating Drop Shadows, Glows

I'm sure this isn't what Adobe had in mind for Photoshop 5's new 3D Transform filter, but the temptation to warp this mother's face and turn her baby into a Conehead just got the better of me.

and other effects, this is something we could have used many versions ago.

*Photoshop 5* has a long list of important new features and abilities which I simply don't have room to describe fully here. Support for spot color channels and DCS 2.0, new Magnetic Lasso and Magnetic Pen tools which ease the creation of paths by reading the contrast between two adjacent objects, live previews for Duotones and other dialogue boxes, definable dot gain curves, new Gradients, and an expanded Info box which lets you sample up to four different points are among the key improvements — as well as my personal favourite, the ability to open PDFs.

In spite of Adobe's potentially boneheaded foray into forcing an ICC-based workflow down our throats, this is still a must-have upgrade.

You'll want to give at least 64MB RAM to *PS 5*. Street price is \$649 (US), and it's shipping now. \*

New Type tool and Layer Effects are outstanding additions (top to bottom): Type creation, and Drop Shadow, Inner Shadow and Bevel and Emboss, all under Layer Effects.

