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Soft Proofing

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Introduction
This document describes how to soft proof your images or documents in the more popular applications before you print them. So what does soft proofing mean? Soft proofing is using your calibrated and profiled monitor, combined with ICC profiles of your print media, to preview how an image, photo, or document is going to look on print output. Soft proofing before you print saves valuable time and money.
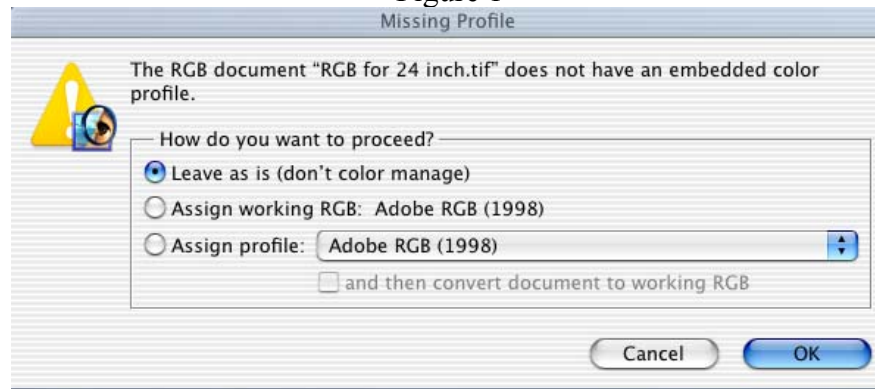
A few things are required for soft proofing…
1) **A monitor calibrator.** If you do not own a calibrated monitor like the Sony Artisan or a monitor calibrator for your monitor like the MonacoOptix, stop here. You cannot soft proof! For more information on monitor calibrators visit: http://www.dtgweb.com/store/list.php4?category=ColorManagement&type=Calibrators&platform=
2) **ICC Profiles for the paper or media that you're printing on for your printer.** If you are using a RIP like ImagePrint you can use those ICC profiles or, DTG provides several custom ICC profiles for the more popular Epson inkjet printers at: http://www.dtgweb.com/downloads/
3) **Software applications that support soft proofing.** An application must have the ability to combine your image or document profile, with your monitor profile, and your output profile. The good news is that most of the professional color applications and RIPs allow this including Photoshop, Illustrator, Quark, and ImagePrint.
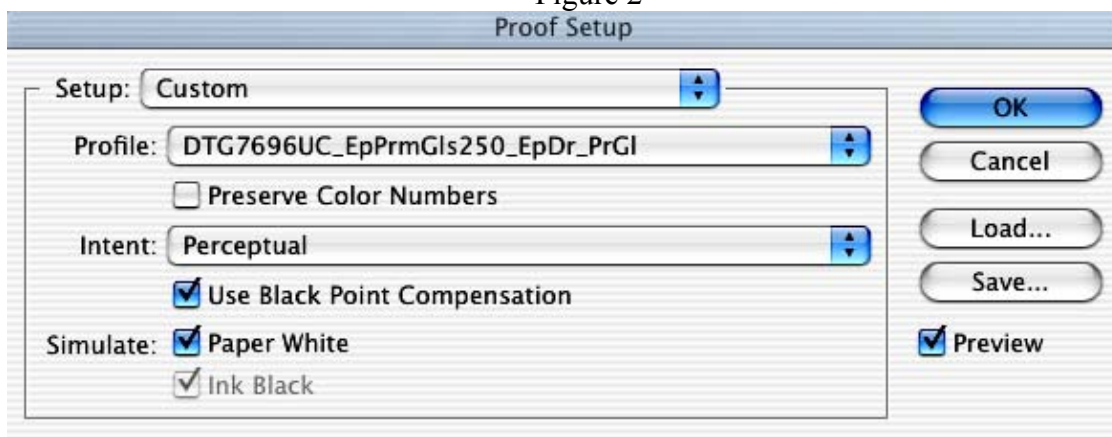
Soft Proofing in Adobe Photoshop
1. Make sure your monitor has been recently calibrated and profiled.
2. Make sure you have set up your color settings in Photoshop. If you have any questions on those settings please refer to either the document color management for photography or color management for prepress-proofing depending on your application at http://www.dtgweb.com/support.
3. Open an image or photo. Make sure the file has an embedded source profile like Adobe RGB (1998). If Photoshop warns you (see Figure 1) that the file does not contain an embedded profile than the soft proof will not be accurate.

Figure 1

4. Go to the menu View …"Proof Setup" and select "Custom". The dialog in figure 2 will appear.
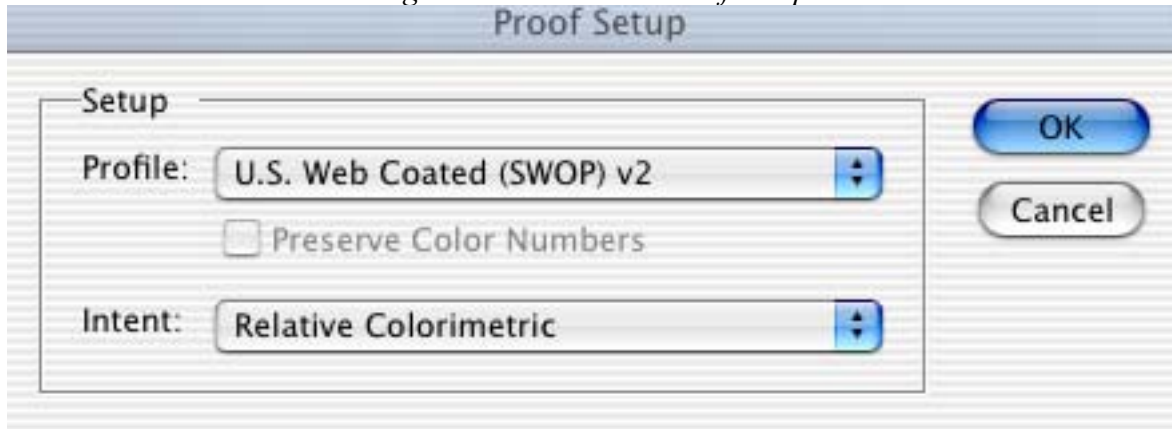
Figure 2

5. In the "Profile" drop-down select the profile for the printer-paper-ink combination that you will be printing on. Don't select "Preserve Color Numbers". For more information on "Intent", "Use Black Point Compensation", "Paper White" and "Ink Black" please see the document "Color Management – Defined" at http://www.dtgweb.com/support. We have found that those 3 selections are for the most part specific to certain medias. So some trial and error would be helpful to you regarding these settings. Print some images with different settings and see which setting matches your monitor the closest.
6. Once you click OK you are now "Soft Proofing" your image. You will notice that the name in the title bar of your image has changed to say "RGB/"name of profile" or "CMYK/"name of profile". You can hold down "Cntrl-Y" on a PC or "Command – Y" on a Mac and toggle the soft proof on and off.

That's all you need to do to soft proof an image in Photoshop. You can now make adjustments to the file while "previewing" how it will print. You will notice that sometimes the soft proof doesn't look any different than the original. This happens with certain images on certain medias (high quality photo-based papers usually). You'll also notice that some types of paper, like canvas and art papers, have a fairly large impact on your image's contrast and saturation.

Soft Proofing in Adobe Illustrator
1. Make sure your monitor has been recently calibrated and profiled.
2. Make sure you have set up your color settings in Illustrator. If you have any questions on those settings please refer to the document color management for prepress-proofing at http://www.dtgweb.com/support/.
3. Open a file and make sure the file has an embedded source profile like Adobe RGB (1998) or U.S. Web Coated (SWOP) v2. If Illustrator warns you that the file does not contain an embedded profile than the soft proof will not be accurate.
4. Go to the View menu, choose Proof Setup and select Custom. The dialog in Figure 3 will appear.

Figure 3 – Illustrator Proof Setup

5. Choose the profile that you are going to be printing on in the profile drop-down. Also choose Relative Colorimetric as the intent (good for proofing vector graphics). Click O.K.
6. Once you click OK you are now "Soft Proofing" your image. You will notice that the name in the title bar of your image has changed to say "RGB/Preview/"name of profile" or "CMYK/Preview/"name of profile".

That's all you need to do to soft proof an image in Illustrator. You can now make adjustments to the file while "previewing" how it will print. You will notice that sometimes the soft proof doesn't look any different than the original. This happens with certain images on certain medias (high quality photo-based papers usually). You'll also notice that some types of paper, like canvas and art papers, have a fairly large impact on your image's contrast and saturation.
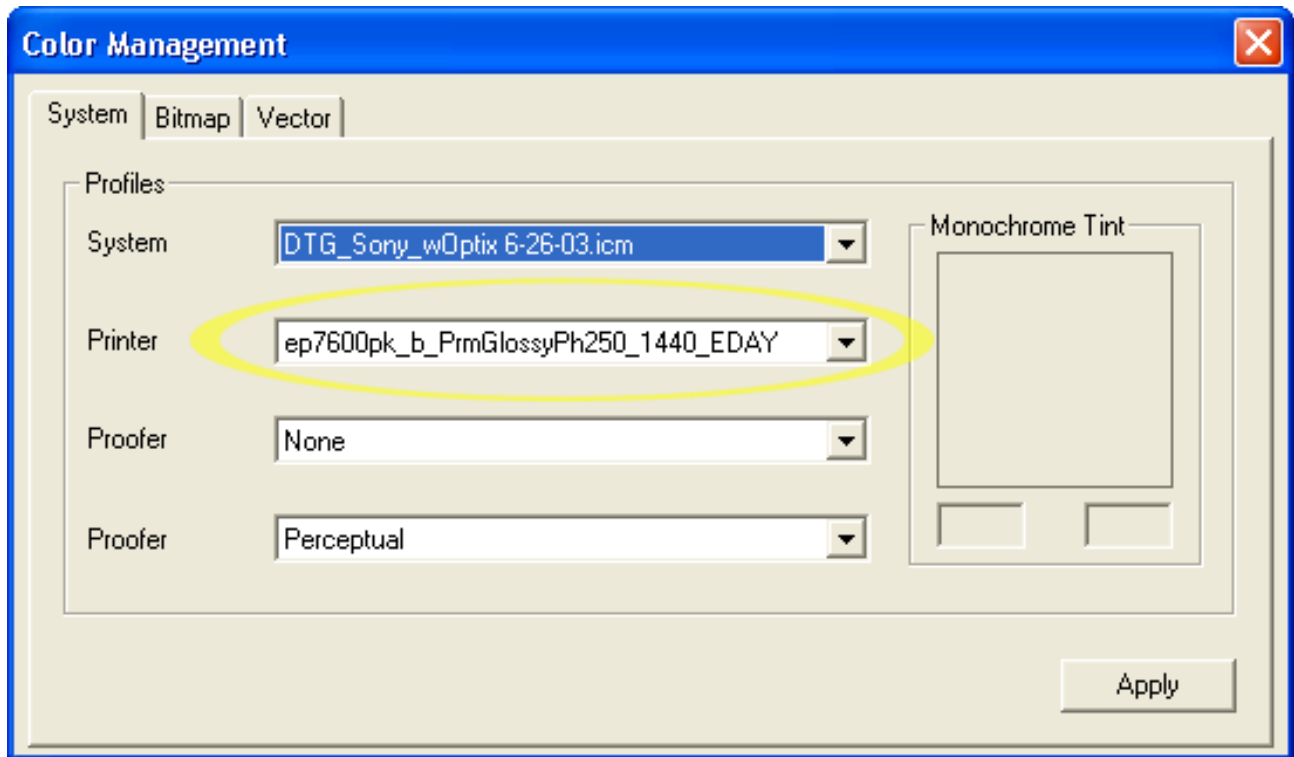
Soft Proofing in QuarkXpress
1. Make sure your monitor has been recently calibrated and profiled.
2. Make sure you have set up your color settings in QuarkXpress. If you have any questions on those settings please refer to the document color management for prepress-proofing at http://www.dtgweb.com/support/.
3. By selecting "Composite Output Color Space" for the Display Simulation drop-down, you are telling quark to soft proof based on the profile you selected in the Destination Profiles section for Composite Output (see Figure 4).

Figure 4 – Quark CMS Setup for Soft Proofing

Soft Proofing in ImagePrint
1. Make sure your monitor has been recently calibrated and profiled.
2. Open an image.
3. Setup your Color Management under the Edit menu making sure you select the correct paper profile under "printer" drop down on the "system" tab.

4. Make sure your Monitor is listed as the "System Profile". If you do not see your monitor profile in the system drop-down list than you need to copy that profile into the "Color" folder within the ImagePrint folder on your hard drive. . If you are not sure how to set all of the other options please refer to the document "ImagePrint Color Settings.pdf" at http://www.dtgweb.com/support/.

5. Click Apply and close the Color Management window.

That's all you need to do to soft proof an image in ImagePrint. ImagePrint automatically soft proofs all of the images you open and layout on the page based on whatever you have set in your color management settings.

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