

PRESS CUTTINGS

Publication: Amateur Photographer

Subject: **Color Munki**

Date: September 2008

Colour management 037
www.amateurphotographer.co.uk



Munki see, **Munki do**

Barney Britton
Technical
Writer



Colour management frightens some photographers, but the **ColorMunki** promises easy, fast, all-in-one profiling for your monitor and printer. We test its claim that it is the photographer's 'new best friend'

Printer manages colours	ColorMunki custom profile	
		

On Harman's Gloss FB A1 300gsm paper, a ColorMunki profile has produced a darker print than the printer's automatic colour management, but tones are more accurate to my screen. They are also more subtle, and shadows have depth

subscribe 0845 676 7778

4 October 2008 AP

PRESS CUTTINGS

Publication: Amateur Photographer

Subject: **Color Munki**

Date: September 2008

038 Colour management

www.amateurphotographer.co.uk



This print was made on Harman Gloss FB A1 paper. The ColorMunki profile is neutral, but on auto the printer has produced a bluey-green cast

The ColorMunki is designed as an all-in-one device, so rather than using a separate monitor and print profiler for profiling both devices, as you would with most systems, the ColorMunki can do it all. A built-in spectrophotometer is rotated to different positions, for self-calibration, monitor/projector profiling and print profiling/colour sampling.

Installing the ColorMunki on an Apple MacBook is quick and easy, and registering the software (online) and activating the measuring device itself takes minutes. Once that's done, and the program is activated, you're ready to create a monitor profile. With the Munki rotated to the appropriate marker (an on-screen graphic shows the current position of the wheel, as you rotate it) you just need to pop the device in its supplied pouch, and hang it over your computer screen. Unlike most other monitor profilers I have used, monitor profiling takes just a few minutes and is very straightforward, even with the 'advanced' profiling setting.

Prints charming

After the ColorMunki has created a new monitor profile, the profile is automatically set and you're ready to move on to your printer. The first thing to bear in mind is that if you're using branded inks manufactured by the company that made your printer, and you're using that manufacturer's recommended paper, it is likely that once your monitor is profiled properly, the prints will match your screen well. This is because every printer has a certain number of profiles already built in, to cover the various

photographer embracing this additional level of control over his or her image-making, there are an awful lot more who are terrified by it.

An entire colour space – sRGB – was developed for the sake of giving designers and photographers an easy life, and as such, most cameras, monitors and printers are set up to use sRGB by default. Other colour spaces are available – the most common of which is Adobe RGB. The benefit of using the Adobe RGB colour space is that it contains more colours than sRGB, and allows your camera and printer to perform at their best. The difference is slight in some images, but you'll see the benefit in the accuracy of certain colours, especially greens and blues. The problem is that using Adobe RGB requires more knowledge, and more

effort, if the camera LCD is to match the monitor, and the monitor to match the print.

Should you wish to use your camera and printer to their full capabilities by shooting in the Adobe RGB colour space, you will need to make sure that your system is properly calibrated. Often this is easier said than done, so I am very excited by ColorMunki's claim to be the photographer's 'new best friend'.

Enter the Munki

As anyone who has read our home printing supplement (AP 26 July) will know, colour management isn't all that complicated in theory. You just need to make sure that every piece of hardware is set up properly. The first step is to calibrate your monitor, to make sure it is displaying colours as accurately as possible.

Each profile requires a minimum of two test charts to be measured



Photo ColorPicker

As well as profiling, the ColorMunki Photo suite is an effective graphic design tool. The built-in Photo ColorPicker automatically analyses photographs from your collection and presents the main tones contained within them in a convenient palette, beneath the image browser window. Although not strictly a photographic application, anyone who finds themselves doing any desktop publishing may find this functionality useful when placing text over or alongside images. The tones that Photo ColorPicker identifies are presented alongside variations (lighter or darker shades), complementary colours and the nearest Pantone match. The ColorMunki can also be used to identify the colour of objects, using a flip-out guide on its base.



AP 4 October 2008

subscribe 0845 676 7778

PRESS CUTTINGS

Publication: Amateur Photographer

Subject: **Color Munki**

Date: September 2008

Colour management 039

www.amateurphotographer.co.uk



ColorMunki's spectrophotometer can be rotated to four positions: 1 is for print/screen/object measurement; 2 is for self-calibration; 3 is for projector profiling; 4 is for ambient light measurement

the profile. Once this sheet has been analysed, ColorMunki creates a custom profile. And that's it – it's that simple. The profile is automatically loaded into your computer, and with an image open in Photoshop you can view the effect of the profile easily by selecting it from the 'Custom' list at View>Proof Setup. It is also possible to fine-tune a profile further by loading the image that you want to print into the ColorMunki software, and measuring a custom test sheet created using the tones contained in the picture.

Clever Munki

I was a little suspicious that after such a stress-free profiling experience, ColorMunki would fail to make any difference to my prints. Surely, it can't be that easy? However, I am relieved to confirm that it is. Viewing prints made on Epson media, the difference between those that were printed using an in-built profile and the custom profile created by ColorMunki is often very slight, but with third-party media loaded the difference is clear. Using Silf's Studio semi-gloss 300gsm paper, the custom ColorMunki profile noticeably improves print quality, and delivers a closer match to the image on my screen, as well as more accurate colours in the print. The difference is subtle in colour landscapes but very obvious in skin tones, and especially in black & white images printed with the 2400's colour ink set. When viewed in isolation the prints don't look 'wrong', but when compared side by side those made with the printer's default settings

(using the nearest available paper match) are not neutral, and midtones are distinctly bluish-green. Likewise, a duotone printed with the automatic colour settings is lighter and more orange than the image on my screen, which ColorMunki's custom profile has rendered almost perfectly.

Using Harman's excellent heavyweight fibre-based gloss paper, which has a baryta layer, the ColorMunki again comes into its own when printing mono or duotone images. Prints have a depth and a richness that is distinctly lacking in those made when the printer manages the colours itself. Harman makes free ICC profiles available from its website to cover common printers, and when I printed images using the appropriate Harman profile, prints are a close match with those made using ColorMunki. Had I been using third-party inks, of course, it would probably be a different story. AP

combinations of ink and paper the manufacturer sells. When you select the appropriate media type in your printer's driver software, the profile is automatically set.

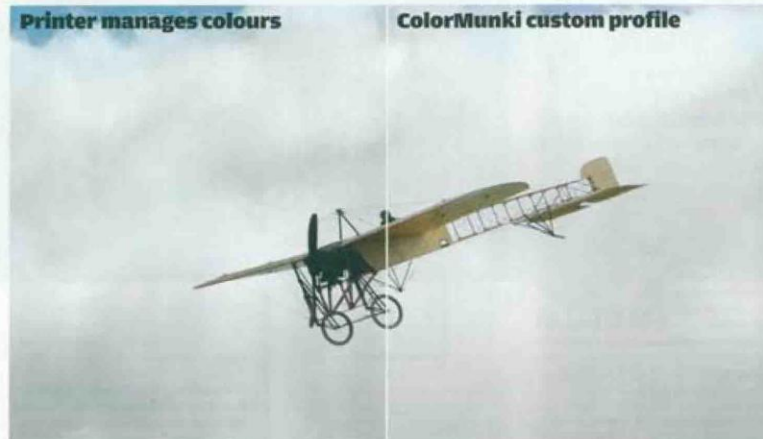
If, however, you're using paper and/or ink manufactured by another company, your printer is not set up to recognise the characteristics in the same way. What you need is a custom colour profile for your specific printer/ink/paper combination. Several companies can supply custom profiles (some at a cost), but the ColorMunki allows you to create your own. Traditionally, DIY colour profiling can be maddening (see my review of Print Fix Pro Suite in AP 18 August 2007), but the potential

On Silf Studio paper, ColorMunki has produced a profile that gives more accurate blues, and lighter shadows

benefits are considerable. Creating a custom printer profile using ColorMunki is a slightly more involved process than monitor calibration, but only just.

With the media loaded in my Epson Stylus Photo R2400, and printer colour management turned off in the driver dialogue, ColorMunki creates a print that consists of 50 arrow-shaped coloured tiles in five rows. A ten-minute drying time indicator appears on screen, and once this time has elapsed the ColorMunki's wheel is rotated once again, and the device is ready to read the colours on the print.

Measuring the colours couldn't be easier – you simply run the ColorMunki over the print in the direction of the arrows, measuring each row in turn. When all five rows have been measured, a second sheet of 50 colour patches is created, in more subtle hues, to refine



subscribe 0845 676 7778

The verdict

ColorMunki is an amazing piece of kit. It is amazing not because it makes prints more accurate – that's what it's designed for – but because I really enjoyed using it. The last time I tested a colour management suite, the tedious 700-patch manual colour analysis had me on the edge of insanity. The last non-animate object to do that to me was last year's tax return. With the ColorMunki, on the other hand, not once during monitor or printer calibration did I feel I wasn't in control of the process. Also, despite its ease of use, I can see clear benefits from using ColorMunki, in my prints, and on my screen. Although it might seem expensive at £375, if you regularly use third-party media, or perhaps a continuous ink-flow system with your printer, its cost will be far outweighed by the benefit in both monitor and print accuracy.

★★★★★
Photographer

ColorMunki is available from Colour Confidens at £375 (inc VAT). Visit <http://shop.colourconfidence.com> or call 0800 0735 845

4 October 2008 AP