Subject: Re: grayscale vs. color
Posted by Struan Gray on Wed, 24 May 2000 07:00:00 GMT
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Andrew, noymer@my-deja.com writes:

> So every time I make a change I have to go into
> IDL _and_ into the GIMP?

Only if your monitor can't be colour calibrated in any sense at all, which since you say "GIMP" could well be true. But then you're going to have a very hard time generating reliable CYMK output in any case.

I do have two displays which always seem to throw images off-balance. They are both flat panels (a Powerbook and a SGI 1600), and I can't prep critical work on them with any program, even those with very sophisticated CYMK implementations.

With all our cathode-ray tube monitors I am able to set them up so that what IDL spits out of the printer is highly predictable. With the better monitors the match is very good. I only *need* to use Photoshop et al when dealing with off-site printers where I want to preview the look of particular pantone ink sets. I would be interested to know what sort of print jobs you are doing which are simple enough in terms of page layout to be done in IDL without driving you nuts, but sophisticated enough in their use of colour to require seamless CYMK integration.

Colour-seperations are not rocket science, and IDL could do them with one hand behind it's back while simultaneously playing the fiddle and dancing the Lambada. The hard part is defining the colour spaces you're translating to and from, and doing so accurately enough to make overriding the printer's default settings worth the trouble. Then making the whole thing cross-platform adds extra headaches and you end up with a lot of extra special-case programming which distracts from more important problems.

We're talking about a multi-thousand dollar data analysis program, extensively used by the world's premier remote sensing and geophysical labs, which still has problems plotting data at the North Pole and gets confused and upset when it tries to grasp the concept of the International Date Line. Blocking up on saturated greens pales into insignificance.

Struan